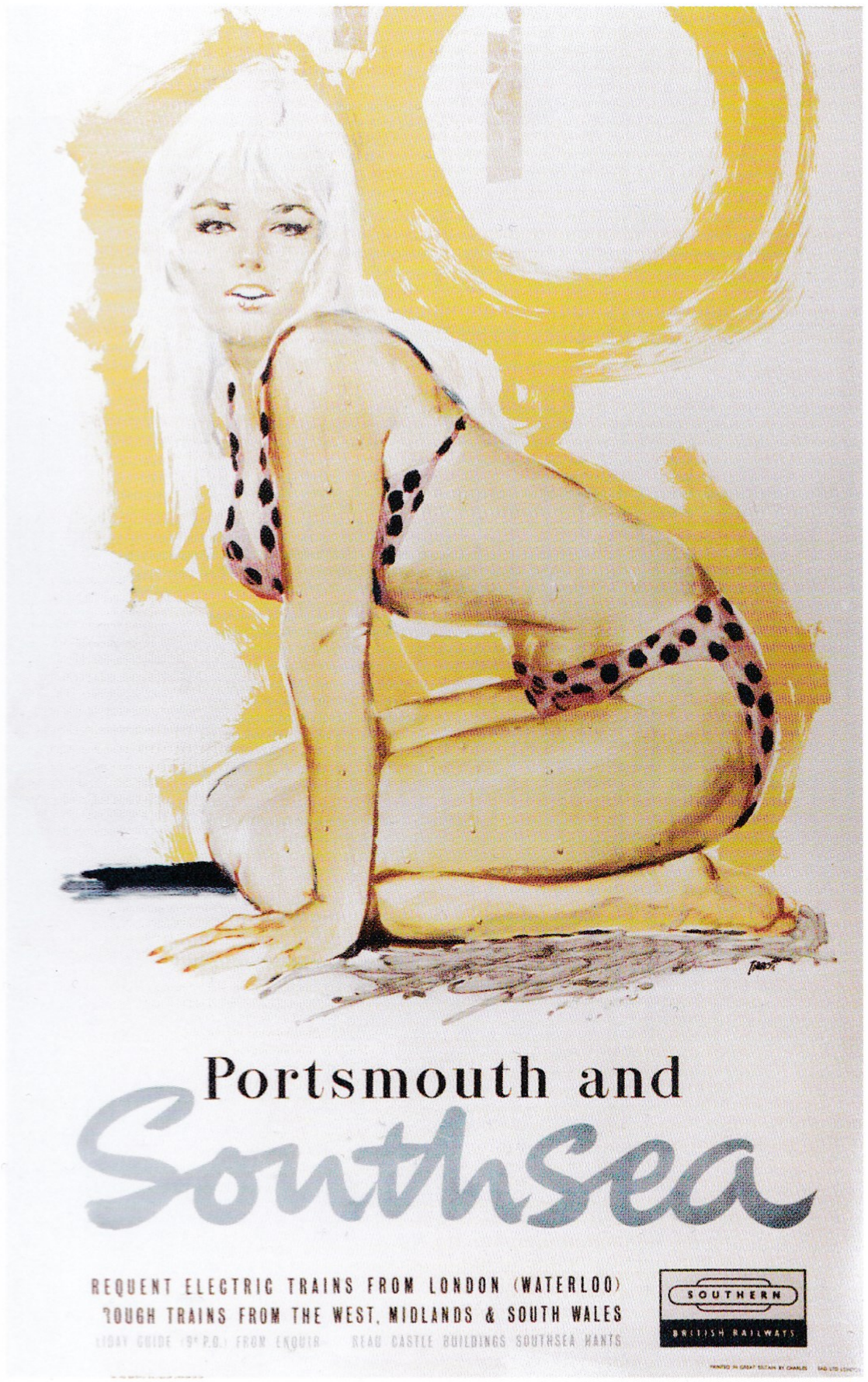
# SELLING SOUTHSEA, PROMOTING PORTSMOUTH, 1920-2000

Nigel Yates

THE PORTSMOUTH PAPERS

72

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*Front cover:*
*The controversial 'bikini girl' poster of 1958.*

*Back cover:*
*A detail of W.L. Wyllie's panorama of Portsmouth and Southsea, painted to be issued as a print with the guidebook of 1930.*
*It is reproduced here larger than original size*

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# Selling Southsea, Promoting Portsmouth: Resort Development, 1920-2000

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## Introduction

The development of Southsea as a seaside resort was part of a national pattern of development which had emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to satisfy the growing demand of those who wished to participate in sea-bathing for the good of their health or, later on, for pleasure. The most successful resorts were those towns that had either been planned as seaside resorts or had been developed from small and decayed fishing ports. Among the ten largest seaside resorts in England in 1911, no fewer than seven fell into one of those categories: Blackpool, Bournemouth, Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings, Southend and Southport.[1] During the last century the latter two have developed into commuter towns, for London and Liverpool respectively, and ceased to be major seaside resorts; the other five are still major players among the seaside resorts of late twentieth century Britain. Three of the largest English seaside resorts in 1911 did not fall into the category of either planned resorts or resorts developed from small and decayed fishing ports. These were Dover, Great Yarmouth and Southsea. The first two were major ports for which the development of seaside attractions was a secondary feature. Dover has, like Southend and Southport, ceased to be a major seaside resort during the last century and now concentrates on its principal role as the English terminal of cross-channel ferry services. Great Yarmouth is still a moderately successful seaside resort, though appealing primarily to the camping and boarding house end of the market.

Southsea was unique among the ten largest English seaside resorts in that it was a separate suburb of a much larger town, Portsmouth, known primarily for its dockyard but also supporting a substantial degree of secondary industry and commerce. Southsea indeed had not even been originally developed as a seaside resort, but as an alternative place to live for those who worked in Portsmouth. It was not until well into the second half of the nineteenth century that it was recognised that Southsea had the potential to develop as a seaside resort and that steps were taken to attract visitors with the development of major hotels - the Queen's in 1861, the Pier in 1865, the Beach Mansions (later the Royal Beach) in 1866 and the Esplanade in 1877, names clearly designed to appeal to a select clientele - and the opening of the Clarence Pier in 1861, the South Parade Pier in 1879, a branch railway line from Fratton to Southsea in 1885 and Canoe Lake in 1886.[2] This chronology of development was remarkably similar to that of five of the other large English seaside resorts of the early twentieth century: Blackpool, Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Southend and Southport. However, whereas three of these towns owed their promotion as seaside resorts to the initiative of one or, in the case of Southport, two major landowners, Blackpool, Southend and Southsea were more piecemeal developments involving a much larger group of landowners.[3] The development of Southsea was also significantly restricted by the fact that it was bounded on two sides by the sea and on the other two by Portsmouth and its northern suburbs of Fratton and Milton. By the end of the nineteenth century no further development was possible, so that between 1881 and 1911 its growth was much less spectacular than those of the other five resorts, the comparable figures being shown in table 1:[4]

**Table 1: Comparative growth of five English seaside resorts 1881-1911**

| *Town* | *Population 1881* | *Population 1911* | *Growth Rate (%)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blackpool | 12,989 | 58,371 | 349.4 |
| Bournemouth | 16,859 | 78,674 | 322.8 |
| Eastbourne | 21,595 | 52,542 | 143.3 |
| Southend | 7,979 | 62,713 | 686.0 |
| Southport | 33,763 | 51,642 | 53.0 |
| Southsea | 34,226 | 43,201 | 26.2 |

From being the largest of the six seaside resorts in 1881, Southsea had slipped to being the smallest in 1911, entirely as a result of the lack of space for further development. The historic development of Southsea was one of the reasons why, compared with some of the other resort towns on the south coast of England, its range of attractions was rather limited and led inevitably to its appealing primarily to the more select category of visitor who demanded relatively little in the way of popular entertainment. These defects in respect of resort development, together with its close proximity to Portsmouth, with its very much less salubrious public image, were to dog Southsea for the rest of the twentieth century, and to lead eventually to a deliberate decision by Portsmouth City Council to cease to market Southsea as a seaside resort, to emphasise instead the historical associations of Portsmouth, and to develop the heritage attractions that would make it attractive to a different type of visitor. This paper discusses the efforts of the city council to promote Southsea as a seaside resort, which lasted until about 1970, and the changes in emphasis that took place thereafter. It also considers the steps taken by the city council and others to underpin the two different images through capital works and expenditure on both resort activity and heritage-related tourism.

## Resort Development and Publicity before the Second World War

Until the passing of the Health Resorts and Watering Places Act 1921 it was not legally possible for a municipal corporation to incur expenditure directly on resort publicity or promotion. Most resorts got around this restriction by encouraging, and in some cases being actively involved in, local publicity committees.The famous railway poster of 1908 which showed a 'jolly sailor' proclaiming that 'Skegness is So Bracing', was published by the Skegness Advancement Association. In Portsmouth the pre-1920 resort guides were published by the Southsea and Portsmouth Entertainment Committee, formed in 1905, which, though not an official council committee, included several members of the council. Technically the law was

*'Sea nymphs at Southsea' from the 1919 guidebook. These girls were members of the cast of 'The Passing Show of 1919', presumably at one of the local theatres.*

observed but the council was able to have considerable influence on the way that Southsea was promoted. The Health Resorts and Watering Places Act declared that:

> the council of any borough or urban district may advertise the advantages or amenities . . . thereof, as a health resort or watering place, by the insertion of advertisements in newspapers . . . or by handbooks or leaflets, or by placards at railway stations, and may expend . . . for the purpose . . . the profits received by them for the letting of chairs, tents, tent sites, bathing machines, platform sites for entertainments, and sites of stalls for beach vendors, or from charges for admission to any gardens, parks, inclosures and places of interest, . . . or . . . any other profits which accrue to such council in providing entertainments or recreation for visitors, provided that the sum so expended in any one financial year shall not exceed the amount which would be produced by a rate of one penny in the pound levied on the ratable value of the borough or district.[5]

These powers were substantially extended in 1936.[6] Portsmouth Corporation responded to the new legislation by renaming its Beach Committee, set up in 1919, the Southsea Beach and Publicity Committee and arranging for the council to take over the stock, assets and liabilities of the former Southsea and Portsmouth Entertainment Committee. In 1931 the Southsea Beach and Publicity Committee was merged with the South Parade Pier Committee to form a new Piers and Beach Committee. In 1963 a further reorganisation of council committees led to the amalgamation of the Piers, Beach and Publicity Committee with the Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries Committee to form the Parks and Entertainments Committee.[7]

The Southsea and Portsmouth Entertainment Committee had very determinedly attempted to promote Southsea as a distinctly 'up-market' resort, eschewing the popular vulgarity of Blackpool or Margate:

*Ramsgate's bathing beauty on a post, 1931. (Author's Collection)*

> Southsea is essentially a place for those who prefer their seaside stay to be spent amid surroundings that are peaceful, quiet and refined, without being dull; for children whose helplessness and venturesomeness demand absolute safety as far as natural conditions go; for all anxious to recruit the fagged body and mind; and, above all, for the lovers of the glorious sea and its never-ending charms, and for those who like to lounge on the beautiful greensward adjoining Southsea Castle.[8]

This approach was maintained throughout the period up to the formation of the Southsea Beach and Publicity Committee in 1921, though with minor modifications. The 1912-13 guides were printed in blue type with blue tinted photographs: in 1919 a slight hint of more daring things to come was indicated by the publication of a photograph captioned 'Sea Nymphs at Southsea'. Initially, however, the new council-controlled committee was not tempted to proceed in a direction that some at least of their ratepayers might find morally unacceptable. The official guides maintained the low-key and factual approach of their 'unofficial' predecessors. They were organised into chapters and, although the chapter headings might vary from year to year, the content was fairly similar: an introduction extolling Southsea's sunshine records and the pleasures it afforded the discriminating visitor, with separate sections on sport, theatrical entertainments and excursions. The 1928 guide

*The 1933 guidebook cover.*

added a useful index of clubs, playing grounds, libraries, theatres, and tram and bus routes. The accompanying photographs were simple location pictures with no attempt made to inject any degree of originality, though the 1930 guide was issued with a reproduction print of W. L. Wyllie's panorama of Southsea. This was in distinct contrast to many other British seaside resorts, which by the late 1920s were experimenting with publicity texts and illustrations designed by experts in promotion and public relations, and borrowing techniques from contemporary magazine journalism and cinema advertising. In 1931-2 Ramsgate Borough Council commissioned a series of publicity stills for its guidebook that copied, quite unashamedly, similar material issued to promote the latest Hollywood films. The published guidebook had a 'key-hole' on the cover through which a posed 'bathing belle' was visible; once the cover was opened she was revealed to be sitting on a post amidst the rock-pools of the beach.[9]

In 1933 Portsmouth Corporation succumbed to the new trend. That year's guidebook abandoned the booklet and chapter approach for a new format, with horizontally long pages, each one devoted to a single topic with an appropriate photograph to accompany it. There was recognition for the growing popularity of sunbathing and attention was drawn to the fact that facilities for this and sea-bathing had been improved by the erection of some thirty to forty new beach huts by the council.[10] A similar format was maintained in all the guides published up to, and including, that for 1940. Even after the Second World War, when it was possible for Southsea to resume its activity as a seaside resort, the guides for 1947 and 1948 replicated the format, and to a large extent the text, of the previous decade. The council faced two problems in its attempt to promote Southsea as a seaside resort. In the first place, as controversy over placards in 1934 and 1958 were to demonstrate, aggressive publicity risked offending local ratepayers. In the second place there had been comparatively little investment in resort development, compared with that at many other seaside resorts, in the early twentieth century, especially in the inter-war period. Most of Southsea's attractions and facilities still dated from the late nineteenth century, though the corporation had taken on the responsibility of reconstructing the South Parade Pier after its destruction by fire in 1904. In 1922 the corporation had managed to purchase Southsea

*The Rock Gardens, Southsea, in the 1930s. Some of the buildings behind were hotels.*

Common from the War Office, having leased parts of it for many years, and agreed to spend £60,000 converting it into 'gardens and playgrounds', including the provision of tennis courts, bowling greens and putting courses. The ornamental gardens were begun in 1924-5 and the rock gardens in 1928: 'from a barren wilderness the Common has been transformed, more or less, into an earthly Paradise'.[11]

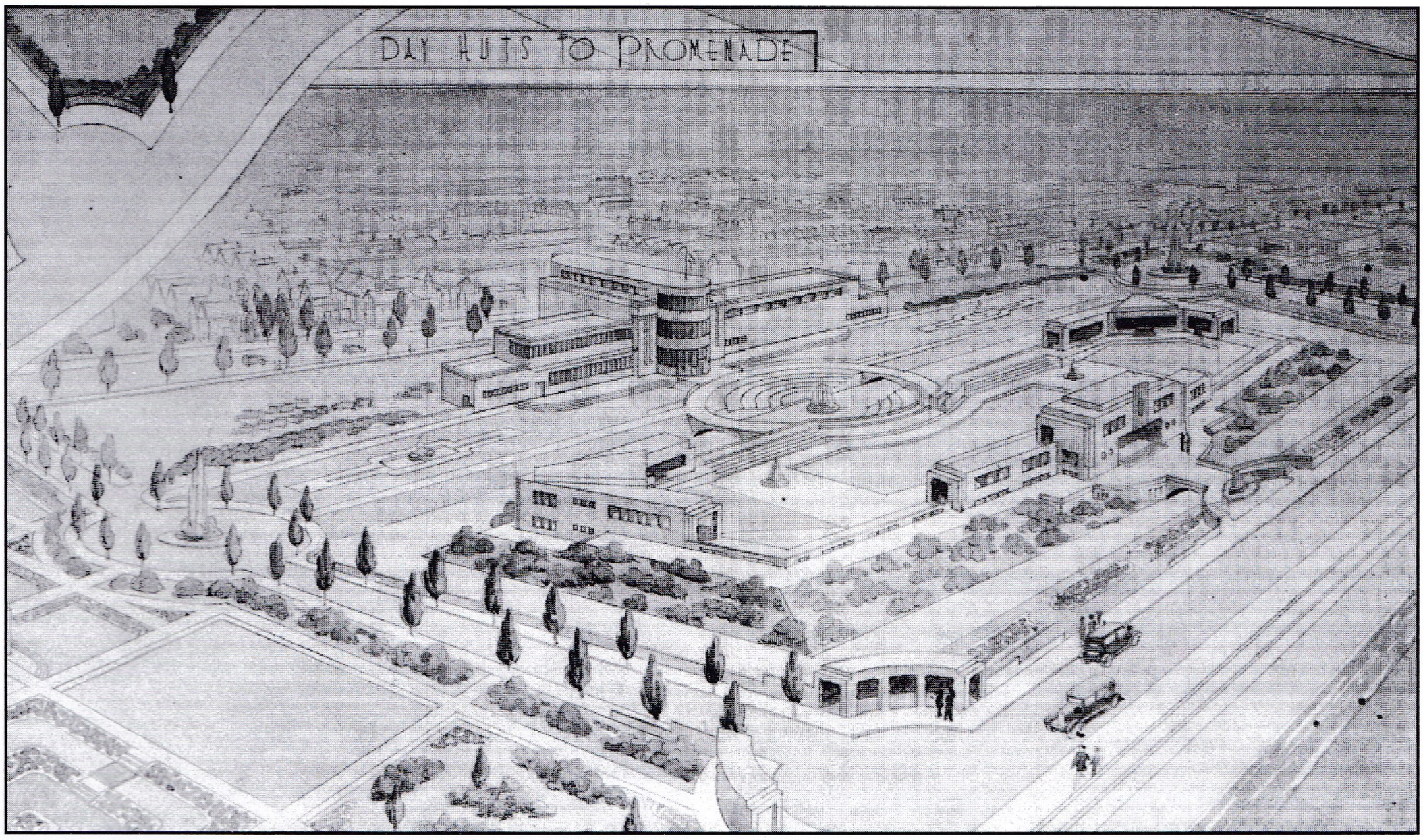
Very considerable debate took place within the newly formed city council, Portsmouth having been granted city status in 1926, on one way of popularising Southsea as a seaside resort, by permitting a broader range of resort activities on a Sunday, much as Southsea had been one of the first seaside resorts to permit mixed bathing on its beaches before the First World War. During 1934 the council agreed that children could use the paddling pool and miniature railway and that public recreation grounds would be open on Sundays and, after a local referendum supported the proposal, that cinemas could open as well. There was strong opposition from some church leaders, who were further incensed when the council sanctioned the publication of a placard with the captions 'Exit Mrs Grundy from Southsea, the resort with no restrictions' and 'Southsea for Sundays: Golf, Tennis, Croquet, Bowls, Flying and Cinemas are Open'.[12] The campaign against the placard was counter-productive. As was noted later by Peter Singleton-Gates, who had been responsible for producing the placard, 'the success of this was due, not to the fact that I had 5,000 displayed on the London Underground alone, but to the critics in Southsea itself . . . whose fumings attracted the attention of the national press'.[13]

In 1932 the city council was able to negotiate a further purchase from the War Office: Lumps Fort, between Canoe Lake and the miniature golf course, at the eastern end of Southsea. The site was sold to the council on condition that it 'will only be used for recreation, parks, pleasure grounds, winter gardens, baths or similar public purposes'. The council therefore set up a competition to design an appropriate development which was not to cost more than £150,000.[14] In 1935 the prize for the best design was awarded to a firm of architects based in Liverpool but no further action was taken. In 1937 an alternative design,

*The 'Exit Mrs Grundy' publicity campaign, an advert from the 1934 FA Cup Final programme.*

emanating from the office of the City Architect and City Engineer, was approved even though the cost had now risen to £225,500. The scheme would have involved the demolition of Cumberland House and the erection between the existing Canoe Lake and miniature golf course, both of which would have been retained, of an outdoor bathing pool surrounded by a boating lake, a ballroom or dance hall, a bandstand, twelve tennis courts and two bowling greens.[15] By the mid-1930s an outdoor bathing pool was considered to be an essential prerequisite for a seaside resort to attract visitors. The more relaxed social attitudes of the inter-war period, and the radical transformation in the design of bathing costumes, had dramatically increased the popularity of sunbathing. The three major Kent resorts of Margate, Folkestone and Ramsgate all opened outdoor bathing pools, Margate in 1927, Folkestone in 1936 and Ramsgate in 1938. That at Ramsgate was by far the grandest and included cafés, balconies, sun lounges and a Venetian boating lake; it was clearly very similar to the design being proposed for Southsea. These outdoor bathing pools were used both for bathing and sunbathing and became the venues for various

*A detail of one of the schemes for the Lumps Fort site submitted in the 1935 competition. It is not known if this was the winning design.*




forms of entertainment, including bathing beauty competitions. 'Mannequin parades of bathing belles' had begun at Ramsgate even before the new outdoor pool opened, though at most other resorts the competitions only really got under way after the 1939-45 war. They offered substantial prizes and attracted large numbers of entrants, not just from the locality, but from quasi-professional competitors who travelled from one contest to another.[16]

Despite the example being set by other resorts, there was a degree of nervousness on the part of the city council as to whether it should embark on such an ambitious scheme at Lumps Fort, with the financial risks that such an undertaking involved. The council had to some extent placed itself in a difficult position by opening an outdoor bathing pool at the northern end of Portsea Island, the Hilsea Lido, in 1935. This development had only cost £40,000 and did not provide the facilities that were being contemplated at Lumps Fort. It had been designed for residents rather than visitors and had been very successful in its first year of operation, attracting four or five thousand users 'on every fine day'.[17] However, in addition to its limited facilities, Hilsea Lido was not conveniently situated to attract visitors to Southsea, who would have had to make a specific journey there, whereas Lumps Fort was situated within easy walking distance from the other main seaside attractions. In 1938 the council sanctioned a limited amount of work being carried out to prepare the Lumps Fort site for development but declined to make a decision to proceed with the outdoor bathing pool.[18] The whole project was effectively killed off by the declaration of war in 1939. Southsea, like most other south coast resorts, had its beach barricaded with barbed wire and frequently placed out of bounds to civilians, and other restrictions were placed on resort activity. It was not until the late 1940s that normal business was restored in the English seaside resorts which, whilst endeavouring to return to pre-war standards of entertainment and the provision of attractions, were soon to face newer and much greater challenges than ever before.

**Post-War Development and Publicity: Phase I, 1945-60**

From the early 1950s English seaside resorts were faced with a real threat to their long-term survival from significant changes in the patterns of holidaymaking. Some of these had begun before the Second World War, partly as a result of the enormous increase in the numbers of people enjoying holidays with pay.[19] The growth of camping, caravanning and self-catering, and in particular the inclusive holidays at affordable prices provided by Billy Butlin and some of the other larger holiday camp operators, had an enormous impact on the traditional hotels and boarding houses and the resorts that relied on this type of accommodation. All seaside resorts were threatened by the growing availability of reasonably priced package holidays to resorts in southern Europe, where the weather was a good deal more reliable than that in the British Isles; these had begun to be in the price range of a large number of potential holiday-makers by the late 1950s.[20]

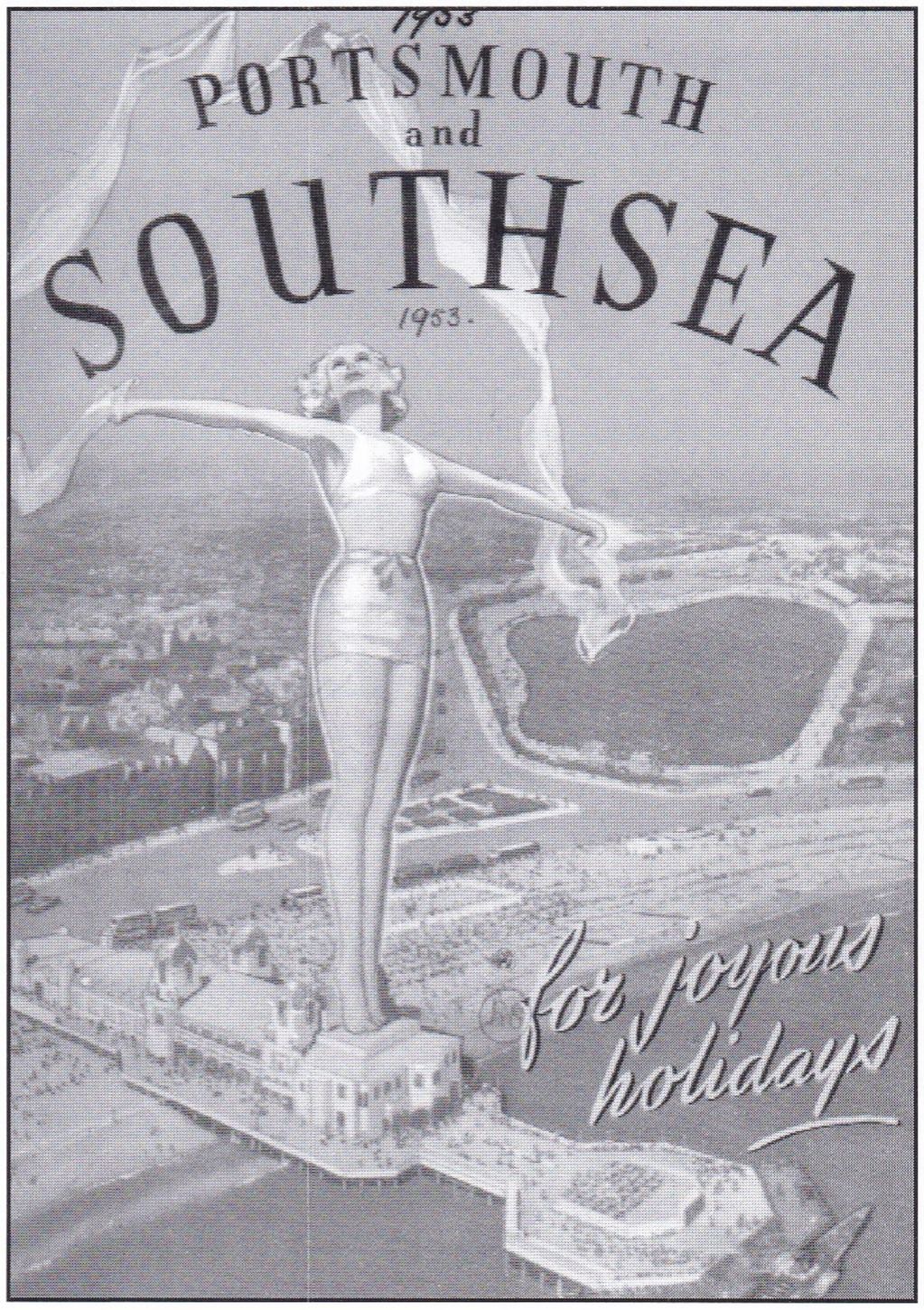
The ways in which resort towns coped with these

*The boating and paddling pools at Children's Corner with the miniature railway station behind, from the 1933 guidebook.*

*The 1953 guidebook. (Portsmouth Libraries, Local Studies Collection)*

*Mailing out the guidebooks, 1954 or 1955. (By courtesy of* The News, *Portsmouth, 1216)*

*Traditional seaside entertainment: cruises from the beach east of South Parade Pier, about 1950. (By courtesy of* The News, *Portsmouth, 8010)*



costumes worn first in the late 1930s.[21] The format was repeated every year from 1950 to 1954, though with some colour photographs of rather poor quality being gradually introduced, and in 1953 the first example - more than twenty years later than some seaside resorts - of an imaginative cover with a bathing belle rising from South Parade Pier.[22] Imaginative publicity did not, however, without further effort, attract visitors. Ramsgate had produced guide books from the early 1930s that were unashamedly brash and vulgar but had spent so little since the Second World War on new seaside attractions that it had become a resort that could no longer live up to its own publicity.[23] Southsea in the mid-1950s was a resort that had neither spent sufficient resources on its infrastructure nor promoted itself very effectively, a situation recognised by the City Development Officer and some of the other senior officers of Portsmouth City Council.

On 9 January 1956 a meeting was held between the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Development and Estates Committee, the Pier, Beach and Publicity Committee and the Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries Committee to consider the possible redevelopment of Lumps Fort. Since the abandonment of the plans submitted before 1939 all that had happened was the creation of a rose garden on part of the

challenges varied greatly. Southsea had begun to break away from its pre-war publicity image as early as 1949 when the resort guide, now entitled *Southsea for Happy Holidays*, adopted a new format with a fairly minimal text, a higher proportion of advertisements and separate pages of photographs, though mostly of a fairly old-fashioned nature. One photograph was sufficiently daring to show a woman wearing the rather voluminous nylon two piece bathing

site, following the failure of a company that had been engaged in 1948 to develop it as a venue for an ice show, and the leasing of another part of the site for the erection of a model village in 1955. Those present at the meeting accepted that as a holiday resort Southsea 'was handicapped owing to the shortage of good hotels and boarding houses at reasonable prices, the limited amount of indoor entertainment and shelter during inclement weather, and the absence of a sandy beach'. The City Development Officer expressed the view 'that in order to compete with other holiday resorts, Southsea must consider improving amenities, particularly with regard to the provision of indoor entertainment and shelter, bathing and paddling pools, provision of large sandpits for children, coach and car parking facilities, together with a helicopter coach station'. In a separate memorandum to the City Development Officer, dated 13 March 1956, the General Manager who reported to the Piers, Beach and Publicity Committee made a series of wide-ranging proposals for resort improvement. These included a sports stadium for the staging of tattoos, pageants, exhibitions, horse shows, gymkhanas and other sporting events during the summer and for renting out to Portsmouth Football Club during the winter; an indoor swimming pool - at that date Portsmouth did not have one, the Victoria Baths not being opened until 1963 - which might stage an aquashow during the summer; a small theatre seating 500 people designed to provide, almost exclusively, entertainment for children; an indoor bowling rink; and at least one hotel run by the Butlin organisation, which ran the Ocean Hotel in Brighton.[24] Billy Butlin had opened his first holiday camp at Skegness in 1936 and later bought up a number of seaside hotels. These offered a similar inclusive holiday package to the holiday camps but in somewhat less spartan conditions. The entertainment provided at the camps and hotels was identical, with a mixture of competitions, tea dances and variety shows.[25]

What the city council's officers were recommending, in somewhat coded language, was that Southsea should move 'down market'. The south coast already had in places like Bournemouth, Eastbourne and Torquay resorts that catered for the more select holiday-maker, but none that could compete with some of the northern resorts, such as Blackpool, in their appeal to lower-middle and working class holiday-makers. Southsea was also sufficiently close to London to attract the day visitors who, at the time, were more inclined to go to Brighton, Margate or Southend, which could offer them better facilities. Such a move would have been a radical departure from the image that had been promoted for Southsea over the previous century and it was one that the city council's members were not entirely comfortable with. There were also the cost implications. To resurrect the ideas mooted for Lumps Fort before the Second World War would have cost £750,000, more than three times the original estimate, and five times what the council had initially been prepared to spend. Councillors wanted assurances that this sort of investment could be guaranteed to produce results. The officers were unable to offer such assurances but made it clear that, without some risks being taken, the further decline of Southsea as a seaside resort could not be prevented.

There is some evidence to suggest that, though Portsmouth's councillors may have made decisions for the wrong reasons, their caution may not have been misplaced. The fact that the adjacent area was already well provided with holiday camps, offering inclusive accommodation and entertainment packages of the popular sort, would have made it difficult for Southsea to compete in this market and the investment would probably not have been recovered. By 1939 there were three holiday camps on Hayling Island and no fewer than twelve on the Isle of Wight. Their number increased still further after the Second World War, reaching a total of 24 camps on Hayling Island, the Isle of Wight and the adjacent parts of West Sussex by 1986.[26] The most ambitious of these was the Butlin's camp at Bognor Regis, the construction of which was announced in 1957 and the first section of which was completed in 1960; 'by the time it was fully completed it could accommodate as many as eight thousand campers at any one time'. However, the Butlin's camp had had to face vociferous objections from some of the inhabitants of Bognor Regis, who claimed that its development 'would spoil the character of this town'.[27] In the light of the objections raised against proposed developments adjacent to Southsea Castle in the 1960s it is likely that any proposal to establish a major holiday camp anywhere in Southsea would have provoked strenuous local opposition. The result was that Southsea's sole provision for campers was the very basic caravan camping ground operated by the city council in Eastney, where the sole luxury was its 'modern lavatory and cloakroom accommodation, with wash-basins, for both sexes'.[28] All the other resort accommodation was of the traditional hotel, boarding house or serviced apartment type which had provided for the needs of visitors to British seaside resorts since almost their earliest days.[29]

What is perhaps surprising is that despite all the doom and gloom being voiced by the officers of the city council, traditional seaside accommodation in Southsea appears to have stood up far better to competition from alternative types of holiday accommodation or holidays abroad than that in some other seaside resorts. In Hastings serviced accommodation of the traditional type had declined from 100% of provision in 1950 to only 38.7% by 1963, the remainder being provided by some type of self-catering provision, whether in caravans, chalets or furnished flatlets.[30] In Southsea, as Table 2 shows, there had been a gradual build-up of traditional seaside accommodation in the immediate post-war period which, as Table 3 shows, only altered very gradually in the subsequent forty years.[31] The lack of space for the creation of additional camping or caravan parks meant that the only growth area for self-catering holiday accommodation was in flatlets and the number of these expanded considerably from 1960.

**Table 2: Growth of serviced holiday accommodation in Southsea, 1946-50**

| *Accommodation Type* | *1946* | *1948* | *1950* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hotels | 45 | 73 | 69 |
| Guest or Boarding Houses | 103 | 95 | 142 |
| Apartments | 168 | 230 | 255 |

**Table 3: Changes in serviced and non-serviced holiday accommodation in Southsea, 1950-90**

| *Accommodation Type* | *1950* | *1960* | *1970* | *1980* | *1990* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hotels | 69 | 67 | 77 | 62 | 28 |
| Guest or Boarding Houses | 142 | 141 | 147 | 83 | 87 |
| Apartments (serviced) | 255 | 95 | 105 | 19 | - |
| Flats or Flatlets (non-serviced) | - | 2 | 75 | 69 | 33 |

The earliest advertisements for this type of accommodation ran:

> Holiday Flatlets. Self Contained . . . China, Bedding, Cutlery and Kitchen Utensils included. No linen . . . Mrs Drozd, Helena Court, 3 Helena Road
>
> Cleveland Court Holiday Flatlets . . . Each flatlet fully equipped except for linen and cutlery.[32]

The raw figures for serviced accommodation disguise some movements between accommodation types. It would appear that some serviced apartments had converted themselves into boarding houses in the 1950s and 1960s, and at the same time some guest houses had sufficiently improved their facilities to justify marketing themselves as small hotels. The real deficiency in Southsea was at the upper end of the accommodation market, in the provision of large hotels with a wider range of facilities. Only two hotels in 1948 - the Queen's and the Royal Beach - had more than a hundred bedrooms and a further four - the Pendragon, the Royal Pier, the Sandringham and the Solent - had fifty or more; only the Royal Beach was able to advertise that of its 150 bedrooms 56 had private bathrooms.[33] Of the 67 hotels listed in 1960 only twelve were licensed for the sale of alcohol to either residents or non-residents. It was not the profile of hotel accommodation that marked Southsea out as a 'select' seaside resort, if compared with equivalent provision in Bournemouth, Eastbourne or Torquay.

The tensions between those who wanted to maintain Southsea as a 'select' seaside resort and those who wanted to make it more 'popular' was again revealed in the controversy over the publication of a new resort placard in 1958. This showed a girl in a bikini, a garment still regarded in some circles as far from respectable, though it had first been worn in France in 1946. It was certainly being worn on British beaches by the mid-1950s, and a very similar illustration of a girl in a bikini had been used on the front cover of the Ramsgate holiday guide in 1956, an illustration repeated in the resort's publicity material for the next three years without stimulating any public criticism.[34] Two members of the city council questioned the propriety of the placard at a meeting of the council, with the result that a publicity initiative which would otherwise have attracted little comment received considerable attention in both the local and the national press.[35] According to one report

> A poster of a sultry-looking blonde in the briefest of bikinis was on view in a city's council chambers yesterday. It is a poster which has been described as 'a moral danger to teenagers'. And it is to be shown at railway stations advertising Southsea as a holiday resort.[36]

One of the objecting councillors, Bert Wilson, had demanded its replacement with something more suitable, 'such as the seafront and shipping', but the Chairman of the Piers, Beach and Publicity Committee, Alderman George Wallis, who defended the poster as 'charming but modest', stated that a thousand copies of the placard had been produced and it was too late to withdraw them. Another councillor, William Edwards, demanded a full debate which was refused by the Lord Mayor, Councillor Arthur Asquith-Leeson.[37] Southsea residents were far from outraged when approached by local reporters. Mr Arthur Crick though it was 'typical of the modern trend . . . Modern in design and imagination - but nothing objectionable'. Miss Penny Pounder described it as 'snappy, simple, eye-catching . . . It serves its purpose admirably by being decently provocative'. Most of the local hoteliers were in agreement. The only critic discovered by the local reporter did not consider the placard objectionable but thought the model was 'not at all beautiful. Wrong hair and wrong tummy-line. I think she could have been a lot better-looking'.[38] Later on there were some letters criticising the placard:

> What bad taste to display an ugly bikini figure to boost Southsea . . . A couple of rowing boats with a few sailors and girls in proper swimsuits would have been nicer. Is there no refinement left in Southsea?[39]

Very few further letters of this type were printed and those newspapers that ran editorials on the topic either defended the placard or accepted it as consistent with current standards in advertising:

> The picture is of a kneeling girl, with her eyes turned to the viewer. While it cannot be said that she is overburdened with clothing, the bathing costume is not indecent according to accepted standards of beachwear.[40]
>
> A somewhat provocative picture of a bathing beauty put out by Portsmouth City Council to advertise the attractions of Southsea is a sign of the times. Soon it will be seen on a thousand railway stations in the company of similar studies, no better and no worse, for other resorts. No doubt it will draw happy families to the seaside.[41]

*The winner and two runners-up in the bikini girl contest of 1958 and (inset) one of the entrants posing as the figure in the poster.*

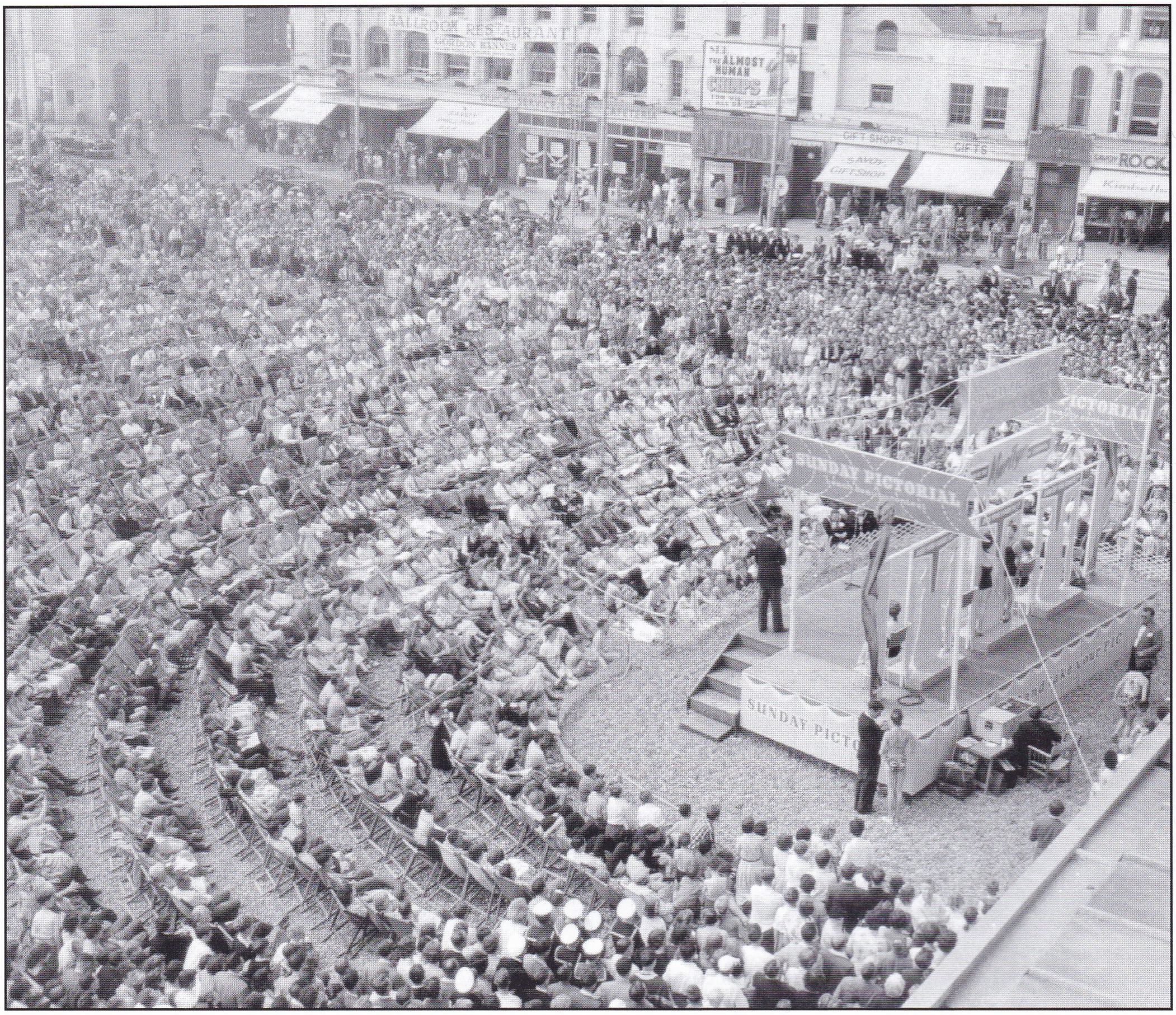
The attempt to have the placard withdrawn had completely backfired. Peter Singleton-Gates, who had produced the 'Exit Mrs Grundy' placard in 1934, wrote to congratulate those responsible for what became known as the 'Bikini Girl' placard, noting at the same time that his later attempt to advertise Southsea with 'a woman in a bathing costume (bikinis would have been unknown then) was rejected by the Publicity Committee, as being lewd . . . half nude . . . and utterly unsuited to the elegant, select and distinguished holiday-makers who might throng Southsea's beaches'.[42]

On this occasion the city council endeavoured to capitalise further on the controversy surrounding the placard by inviting the model who had posed for it to visit Southsea. It then transpired that there had been no model. The figure on the placard had been painted by an Italian artist, Mario Tempesti, without a model. Although the link was not made at the time it seems very likely that the idea was pirated from the Ramsgate illustration published two years earlier. The Piers, Beach and Publicity Committee decided to find someone who closely resembled the girl portrayed:

> SOS to blondes: Portsmouth City Council have made this appeal to all blondes in the British Isles: If you think you resemble Southsea's Bikini Girl railway poster send a photograph and details of your vital statistics to the Publicity Department . . . The contest is being held at Portsmouth on June 28. Winner will receive £50 plus a silver cup and will be asked to attend various functions at Southsea during the summer. The Navy will get a preview of the competition at a Bikini Dance.[43]

The press reported a considerable lack of local participation in the contest. Shortly before the end of May it was noted that though entries had been received from Caerphilly, Derby, Huddersfield, Kidderminster and London, only one entrant came from the Portsmouth area with a further one from Shanklin in the Isle of Wight. In an effort to drum up local support for the contest a picture was published of Anne Ferris, an eighteen-year-old from Paulsgrove, who had participated in a fashion parade at the

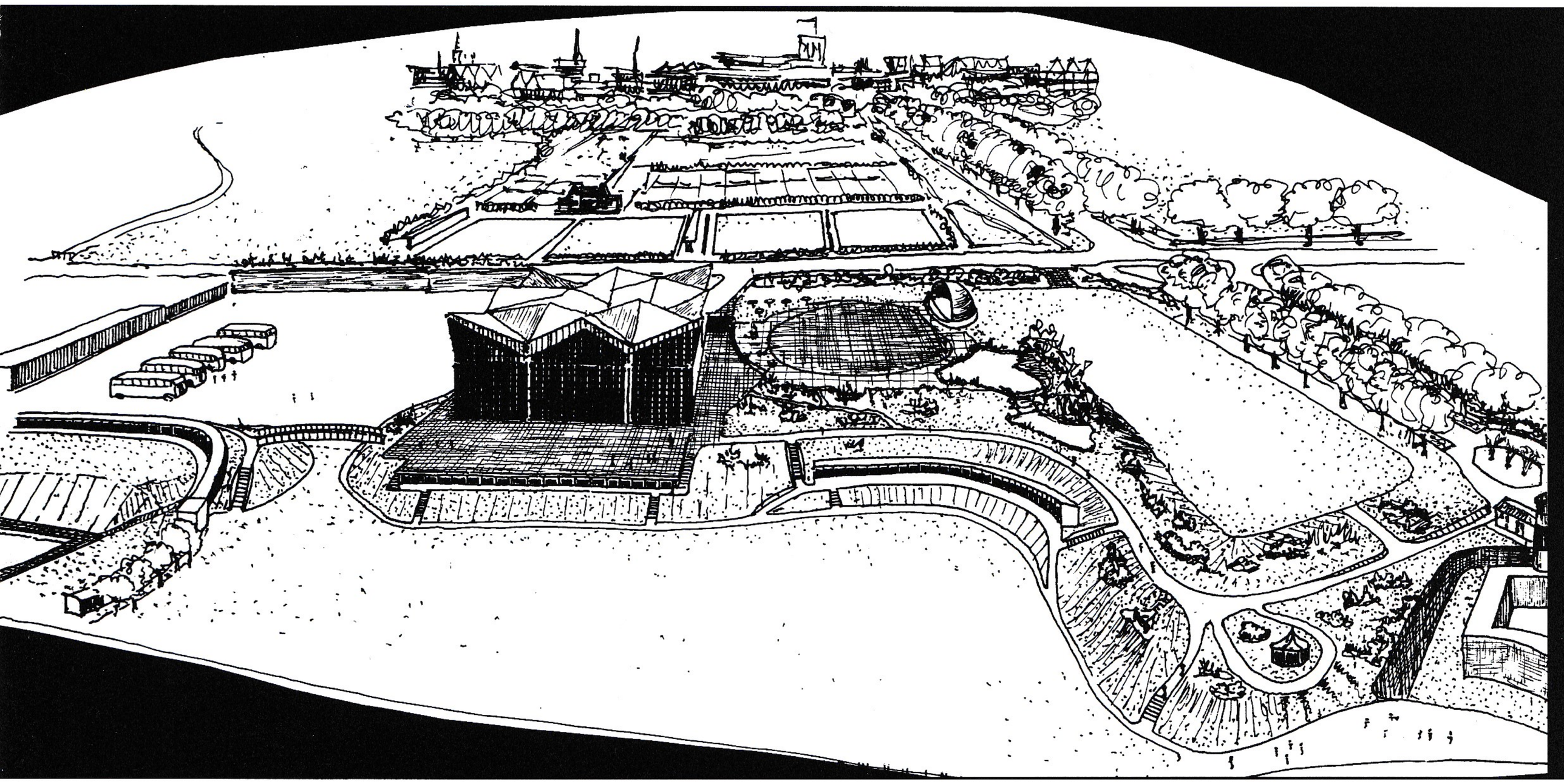
*The* Sunday Pictorial's *competition to find the girl with a figure like Marilyn Monroe or the Venus de Milo, 1958, photographed from South Parade Pier.*




Landport Drapery Bazaar wearing a polka-dot bikini almost identical to the one illustrated on the placard, and posing in the same position.[44] Over the following weeks, pictures were published of various entrants and on the eve of the contest it was noted that there were 29 entrants altogether; the arrangements were that 'each girl would go on the stage, and the curtains would part to reveal her in the pose of the poster girl. There will be a line up on the stage and the girls, in their bikinis, will parade for the judges and among the audience'.[45] The contest itself was extensively reported, with pictures, in both the local and national press. The winner, Cecile Castle from Shanklin, and the runners-up, Jane Hyde from Bedhampton and Maureen Batchelor from Brighton, were presented with their prizes by Alderman George Wallis, who was also one of the judges.[46]

It may seem surprising in a more politically correct climate that a contest of this sort should not have elicited more criticism but, in addition to the more normal run of bathing beauty competitions, for which swimsuits rather than bikinis were worn, Portsmouth also staged in 1958 that year's contest, run annually by the *Sunday Pictorial*, in which 'Britain's shapeliest beach girls' could 'measure their curves' against cut-out silhouettes of Marilyn Monroe and the Venus de Milo.[47] The controversy over the original placard, like that over the 'Exit Mrs Grundy' one in 1934, was superficially a debate about morality. In reality it reflected the differences within both the city council and the wider community over what type of seaside resort Southsea ought to be. As in 1934, the placard experiment of 1958 was not allowed to influence the longer-term promotion of Southsea. Although the shape of the guidebook had changed in 1955, there was little change in either content or presentation from then until the mid-1970s. No girls in bikinis were allowed to appear in the guidebook until 1969, when one was used to

*Artist's impression of the proposed entertainment centre behind the Victorian gun emplacements west of Southsea Castle, 1961, a drawing prepared by the city council.*



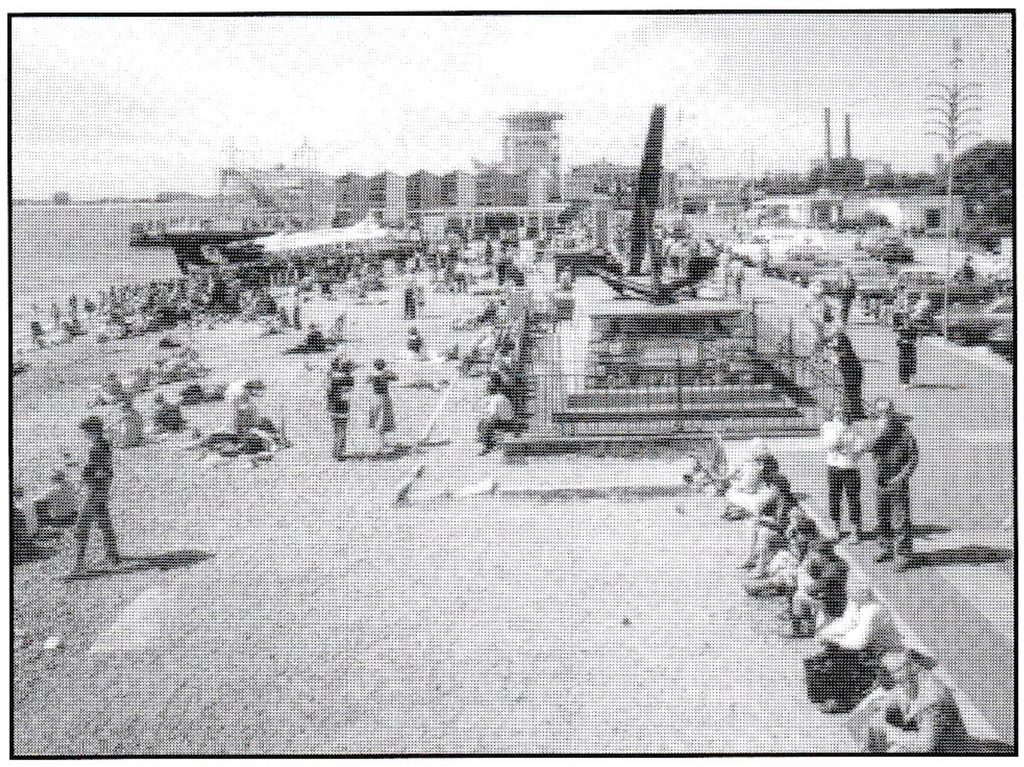
illustrate the front cover, and two years later the inside pages contained photographs of girls in swimsuits leapfrogging over one another in poses reminiscent of the Ramsgate resort publicity of the 1930s.[48]

**Post-War Development and Publicity: Phase II, 1960-2000**

The year 1960 was the one which, unbeknown to the participants, marked the origins of Portsmouth City Council's eventual decision to abandon the promotion of Southsea as a seaside resort and to invest instead in developments that would encourage an entirely different type of visitor, one interested in heritage, to whom the whole of the Portsmouth conurbation could be marketed as the place in Britain which had contributed most to the defence of the realm since the initial development of its dockyard in the late fifteenth century. The catalyst was the decision by the Crown Estate Commissioners to dispose of Southsea Castle. In 1960 the city council agreed to purchase the castle for £35,000. Its initial intention was to use the land adjacent to the castle for the provision of new resort attractions, harking back to the abortive discussions of this topic in 1956. The first proposal was for a winter garden and restaurant at an estimated cost of nearly £500,000. In 1961 this was scrapped in favour of leasing the land adjacent to the castle to a private developer as a site for a new hotel. There was strong opposition to this proposal from local residents, especially the members of a newly formed amenity society, who considered the site inappropriate. At a meeting of the city council on 9 May 1961 the proposal for hotel development was defeated by 48 votes to eight. It was agreed that most of the castle should be handed over to the Libraries and Museums Committee for use as a museum. Since the destruction of the city's main museum and art gallery in the Second World War the only local authority museums in Portsmouth were Cumberland House, opened in 1931 and Charles Dickens' Birthplace, opened in 1904. In 1967 the city council opened Southsea Castle as a museum and appointed its first professional director of museums. This was followed by a further expansion of museum facilities: Charles Dickens' birthplace was refurbished and reopened to the public in 1968-70, a new City Museum and Art Gallery was completed in 1972, and further opportunities to view historic buildings were made available at Fort Widley and Eastney Pumping Station.[49]

Whilst the city council was prepared to make an initial concession to the new and vociferous amenity lobby by allowing Southsea Castle to become a museum, it was still anxious to develop the adjacent land. Invitations to developers to make proposals resulted in three schemes being considered; one would have included a zoo, putting green and restaurant; a second offered a skating rink, bowling alley, swimming pool, ballroom, jazz cellar and motel; the third, which was the one the council decided to support, would have provided Southsea with an oceanarium. Although the scheme was approved at a public enquiry in

*Clarence Pier, rebuilt in an uncompromisingly modern style after wartime destruction.*



1964, the developers pulled out later that year on cost grounds. The original scheme had envisaged that the pools would have been open air ones but further research established that the unsuitability of the climatic conditions would have killed the pools' occupants; if the mammals were to survive the pools had to be fully enclosed and the whole oceanarium had to be air-conditioned, thus dramatically increasing the projected costs. In 1965 the Council considered a new scheme to provide a three-level car park, multi-purpose sports hall, small theatre, floral hall, swimming pool and catering facilities, but abandoned this after the estimate of the capital costs had reached £2.4 million and that of the annual revenue loss was thought likely to be in the region of £183,500. In the end the council agreed that the only expenditure it was prepared to sanction was a sum sufficient to lay out gardens over most of the site.[50] The grandiose vision of the oceanarium was not to be realised until 1986 when the new Sea Life Centre was opened on the site of the former miniature railway and children's paddling pool. The only significant development of the 1960s, specifically designed to contribute towards Southsea's viability as a seaside resort, was the reopening in 1961 of the Clarence Pier, destroyed by bombing in 1941; the new pier cost £400,000 of which three-quarters was recovered from war damage payments.[51] When the South Parade Pier was badly damaged by fire in 1974 it was also repaired and reopened, though in a much shorter period of time.

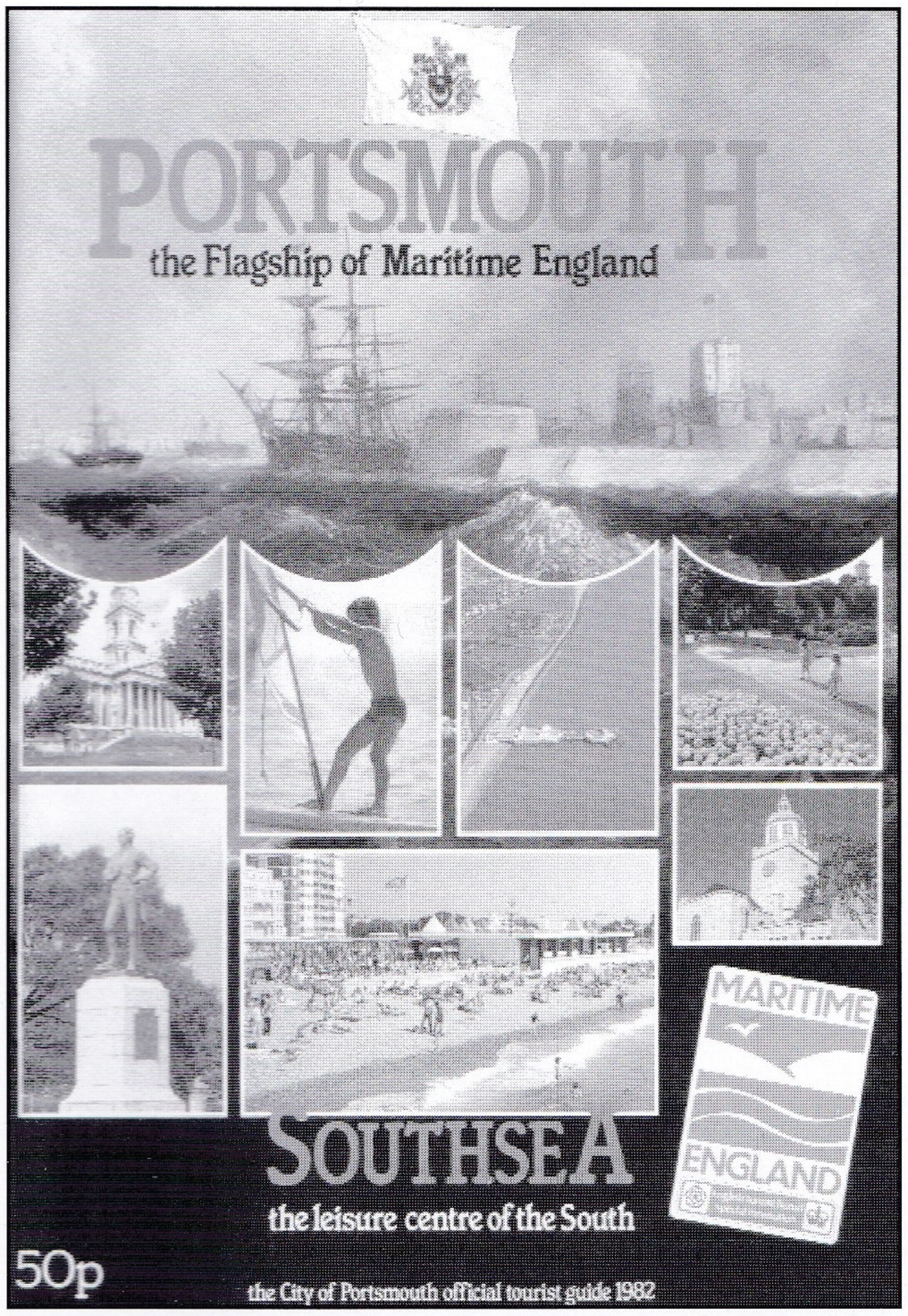
The work that had been done in the 1960s on revitalising and expanding Portsmouth City Council's museums meant that Southsea was in a better position than most other seaside resorts to respond to the new developments that were beginning to take place in British tourism from the end of that decade. Seaside resorts had not traditionally seen themselves as centres for tourism - places to visit in the vicinity were rarely given more than one or two pages in resort guides - and promotion of tourism in Britain as a whole had lagged behind that in most other European countries. A different approach, with much greater emphasis being placed on regional and sub-regional tourism, was ushered in by the Development of Tourism Act 1969. Some of the larger seaside resorts, which had invested heavily in what one commentator described as the provision of 'a concentrated entertainment factory', found it difficult to adapt to this new approach.[52] Southsea, where no such investment had taken place, found it comparatively easy. A start was made by setting up in 1966-7 a working party under the chairmanship of Councillor F. A. J. Emery-Wallis, then one of the newer and younger members of the city council, who had been part of the pressure group against the council's original proposals for Southsea Castle.[53] It was recognised that the investment that the city council was now making in the development of new museums could be used not just for the benefit of local residents but as a means of increasing the number of visitors to the city and boosting the local economy. It was also recognised that the city's importance in military operations had a part to play in this new emphasis on heritage provision. The dockyard itself contained both Nelson's flagship, HMS *Victory*, moved there in 1922, and the Royal Naval Museum, opened in 1911. It also possessed an extremely significant range of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings, though access to these was very limited:

> the only part of the Dockyard which is regularly accessible to visitors is that on the route between the Main Gate and HMS *Victory* [including the Royal Naval Museum] . . . St Ann's, the Dockyard church, can also be visited by the public. Except on special occasions, such as Navy Days, the rest of the Dockyard is not accessible to the general public.[54]

Portsmouth was also the location of the Royal Marines Museum, opened in Eastney Barracks in 1958. This museum had begun as a relatively small enterprise but a contraction in the military role of Eastney Barracks enabled the museum to be moved in 1975 from its original location to much more spacious premises in the former officers' mess. Further enlargements were made in 1981 and 1983. Numbers of visitors each year had risen from 18,000 in 1966 to over 50,000 by 1972 and nearly 60,000 by 1986.[55] By 1973 the council had agreed that 'one of the principal aims of the Public Relations Officer now is to project Portsmouth as the centre of one of the most interesting regions in the country'.[56] In 1979 the city council agreed to join with Hampshire County Council, the neighbouring district councils, the Ministry of Defence and other bodies in the setting up of a Portsmouth Area Heritage Advisory Committee, 'with the object of furthering and improving the use and potential of the heritage resources of the area for the benefit of the public'.[57]

The new emphasis on heritage was reflected in the city council's own publicity. Previously the published guide had concentrated on the attractions of Southsea as a seaside resort, despite wide recognition since at least the 1950s that a resort that had been starved of capital investment for the best

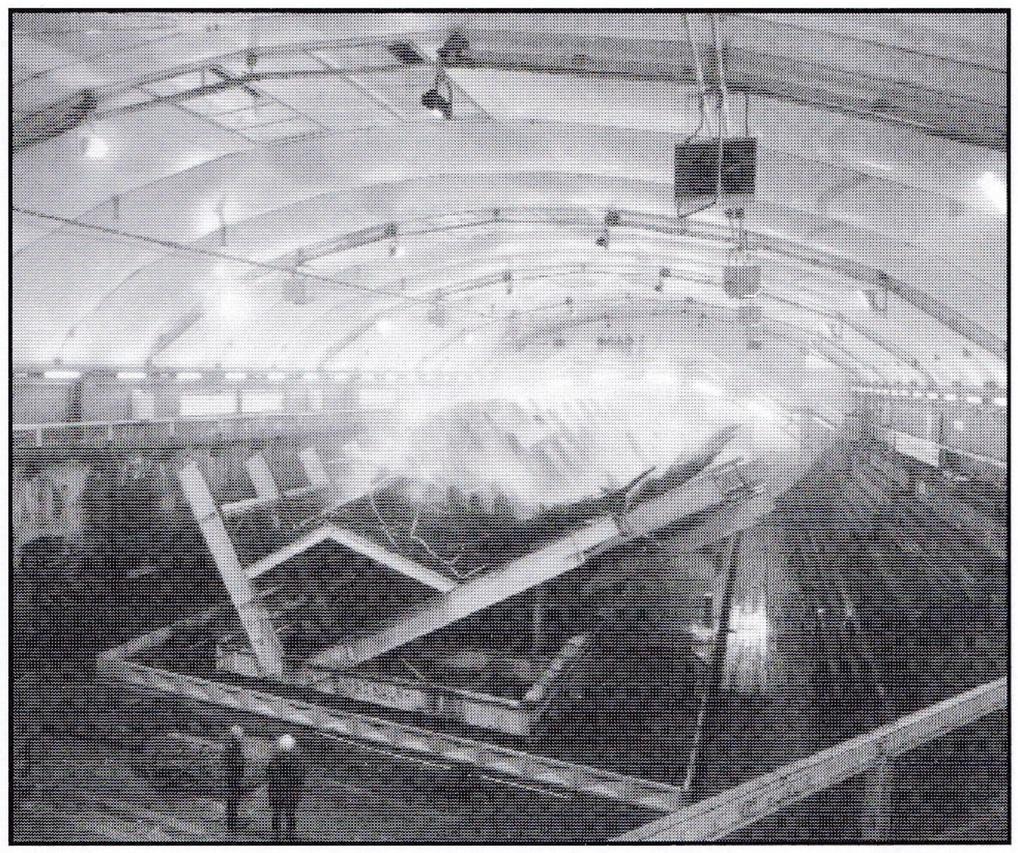
*The guidebook for 1982, with its successful slogan, 'Flagship of Maritime England'.*




part of a century offered considerably less to the visitor than most of its competitors. Until 1949 the guide had, in the terms of its title, been primarily to Southsea, with Portsmouth added almost as an afterthought. Between 1950 and 1968 the guide was to 'Portsmouth and Southsea', though with the emphasis very firmly on the latter, and in 1969 it reverted for three years (1969-71 inclusive) to being labelled Southsea only. In 1972 the guide was retitled 'Portsmouth and Southsea', and from 1982 Southsea was finally dropped from the title, only two pages of text being devoted to 'Southsea - the leisure centre of the South'; the sole concession to an earlier approach to resort publicity was an article on sun huts accompanied by a picture of a girl in a bikini.[58] However, from 1975 the text of the guidebook had been significantly altered to put more emphasis on the heritage aspects of the Portsmouth area and less on the seaside, a process which had reduced the latter to just the two pages mentioned within seven years.

In 1979 Portsmouth City Council resolved that all its departments should adopt a corporate approach to encouraging and developing tourism in the city. An officers' working party was set up comprising the Director of Leisure Services, City Planning Officer, City Museums Officer, City Secretary and Solicitor and City Treasurer to which

*The* Mary Rose *still in the cradle in which she was raised, shortly after she was brought into the dockyard.*



representatives were co-opted from the Southern Tourist Board and the Southsea Hotels, Guest Houses and Caterers' Association. Preliminary work on a report was completed in 1981 and the final version produced in the following year.[59] Its most important section was the final chapter headed 'Tourism Initiatives'.[60] Whilst this recognised that the decision to market Portsmouth and Southsea as the centre of a heritage tourist trail had been successful and ought to be continued, there were also sections that looked at whether the seaside resort aspects of Southsea should not also be enhanced in the light of successful initiatives in this area in other seaside resorts.

The report's authors felt that the city council's investment in the expansion of the museum service had not yet realised its full potential. The six museums attracted a total of 156,867 visitors in 1980 and would cost the council some £600,000 in 1981-2, a subsidy of nearly £4 per head of population. Southsea Castle had suffered a drop in the number of visitors from 99,704 in 1974-5 to 87,557 in 1980.[61] Work was in progress on the refurbishment of the Cumberland House museum and aquarium and it was felt that the other museums would benefit from 'the use of imaginative design, display and interpretation techniques'. Attention was drawn to the new Dickens centre in Rochester, financed and operated by Medway Council, where 'the use of plaster models, tableaux, sound effects, moving models, special lighting and clear well written and presented facts all combine to make this centre a memorable place to visit'. The centre had been opened in 1979 and had attracted 93,000 visitors in its first year of operation; it had the advantage that its 'layout and design . . . enables it to function with very few staff'.[62] It was implied that the city council had missed an opportunity to do something similar when Dickens' birthplace had been refurbished in 1968-70 and suggested that perhaps it could now be attempted in Portsmouth as the city council owned the adjacent property. The City Museums Officer was urged to review the whole operation

*HMS* Warrior *being berthed alongside the new jetty, 1988.*

of his department with the aim of increasing the number of attendances, and the income that this would provide, as a means of reducing operational costs, and to undertake research into ways in which the city council's museums could make a greater contribution to tourism.

The report's authors also drew attention to the potential development of a maritime heritage centre in Portsmouth Dockyard. By that time plans were well in hand for raising the *Mary Rose*, the warship that had sunk in the Solent in 1545, but the city council had originally envisaged a site for its exhibition in Eastney. An alternative site in the dockyard had been put forward by the Maritime Preservation Society which was keen to see it displayed near HMS *Victory*, together with a number of other historic ships. The decision to support this proposal marked a significant change in the city council's policy and conveniently coincided with the dockyard's own need to review its future. In June 1981 the then Secretary of State for Defence, John Nott, announced that as part of his department's review of all the armed services, the government was proposing to close completely the dockyards at Chatham and Gibraltar and that they would be 'contracting activities', that is to say slimming down to a

*A figure at the entrance to* The Dockyard Apprentice, *a display about dockyard workers in Boathouse 7, one of the projects of the naval base property trust in the 1990s. The building houses an education area, play area, shop and restaurant as well as the exhibition.*

maintenance facility rather than one that could undertake major refits, at Portsmouth. In November that year the Ministry of Defence confirmed that these arrangements would be put in place from 1983. The dockyard authorities at Portsmouth were forced, as they were at Chatham, to look at ways in which their shortly-to-be-redundant facilities could be redeveloped. Both eventually adopted programmes that saw a mix of new or revamped heritage attractions and commercial redevelopment.[63]

As the first stage in this redevelopment programme, when the *Mary Rose* was finally raised from the Solent in 1982 she was moved to a converted dry dock and temporary exhibition hall next to HMS *Victory*. The navy was reluctant to agree to her being placed there, and did so on the understanding she was to be there on a short-term basis. In the longer term it was important to find alternative uses for the large number of buildings in the dockyard now no longer required for their original purposes, yet buildings of considerable architectural and historical significance. Two trusts were created in 1985: a Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust to secure a future for these redundant buildings and a Portsmouth Naval Heritage Trust to oversee the operation of the various heritage ventures in the dockyard. At the outset it was possible to learn from the experience of Chatham, where the Ministry of Defence had provided the new dockyard trust with an endowment insufficient to make the necessary repairs to buildings to create opportunities for alternative use. When the Ministry of Defence offered £1.5 million to the property trust the offer was rejected until a full survey of the buildings had been conducted. This revealed that the cost of putting them into decent repair was likely to be much greater than the endowment originally offered. After negotiations between the property trust and the Ministry of Defence, the former agreed to take on responsibility for the redundant buildings in the dockyard with an endowment of £6 million, with the latter agreeing to accept residual responsibility for these buildings should the endowment prove insufficient. The next major development was the relocation of HMS *Warrior*, commissioned in Portsmouth in 1861, to a site near the main entrance of the dockyard in 1987. This had been made possible by the decision of the city council to fund the building of a jetty for HMS *Warrior* at a cost of £1.3 million. The city council had also taken the initiative in setting up the two dockyard trusts, devoting vast amounts of officer time to this operation, and not seconding staff full-time to the property trust until 1988.[64]

There is no doubt that by the mid-1980s the dockyard was a major heritage attraction, though visitor numbers fluctuated quite dramatically from year to year: 275,245 people visited HMS *Victory* in 1986 compared with 455,519 in 1983; the 127,247 people who visited the Royal Naval Museum in 1986 represented a 16.2% decline in the 151,814 visitors of the previous year; in the first full year of opening (1984) the *Mary Rose* attracted 437,409 visitors; in 1986 it was 351,231.[65] Until 1986-7 admission to HMS *Victory* and the Royal Marines Museum in Eastney was free, but charges were introduced at the former in June 1986 and the latter in March 1987. Though the introduction of charges at HMS *Victory* did not appear to have a major impact on visitor numbers, those at the Royal Marines Museum fell by nearly a half. There was, however, a recognition that the presentation of some of the dockyard's heritage attractions was somewhat old-fashioned and several reports were produced on ways in which this problem might be addressed.[66] In 1985 the newly formed naval property and heritage trusts had jointly invited commercial operators to put forward proposals for the development of the heritage section of the dockyard. Sea Containers, through its subsidiary company Sealink British Ferries, submitted a proposal in March 1986 and presented its development plan in July 1987. Under these proposals 57% of the site would still have been given over to heritage displays, and nearly 10% to education facilities; nearly 20% was to be devoted to catering outlets and the remainder to retail and ancillary facilities. The overall management of the heritage area of the dockyard was to be the responsibility of a subsidiary company formed by Sealink British Ferries. Although some of the bodies responsible for individual attractions within the dockyard were initially hostile to such a commercially-orientated proposal it was, with some modifications, eventually agreed. What finally caused the project's collapse was the deep recession of the early 1990s, with Sea Containers eventually announcing that it could no longer proceed, six days before the intended signing of heads of agreement, on 9 July 1992. The situation was not assisted by the fact that many of the ambitious visitor figures projected in the mid-1980s were clearly not being met. These figures were, in fact, in modest decline. HMS *Warrior's* annual visitor numbers fell from 205,000 in 1988 to 156,000 in 1991, though the decline had been less severe, only about 10%, at the *Mary Rose*, and there had been a rise of about 15%, despite the charges, at HMS *Victory*.[67]

*HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother viewing the Overlord Embroidery when she opened the D-Day Museum, 1984.*

Following the withdrawal of Sea Containers the property trust decided to proceed with its own scheme of redevelopment. Whilst this was less ambitious and costly than what had been considered possible in the late 1980s it followed generally the same outline, with new exhibitions, catering facilities and retail outlets. These included a new visitor reception centre, the construction of a landing stage for harbour boat tours and the creation of substantial new parking facilities for visitors. The efforts of the trust and other dockyard attractions were rewarded by a rise in visitor numbers in the first half of the 1990s and plaudits from English Heritage, Europa Nostra and the Portsmouth Society. The scheme also included some new elements, not directly related to heritage interpretation or commercial enterprises, such as the partnership with Portsmouth University to produce new postgraduate teaching and research facilities in a restored and renovated Boathouse 6.[68] Whilst the successful programme for the redevelopment of the dockyard has undoubtedly preserved for the future its important architectural heritage, and indeed made it accessible in the way that it never was before, one critic argues that some 'authenticity and architectural quality' have been lost in pursuit of 'securing value for money'.[69] Nevertheless even the he accepts that some elements of progress have been beneficial, such as the re-interpretation of HMS *Victory*.

> Until 1990 the naval ratings employed as guides provided idiosyncratic commentaries about life on board the warship. Doubtless in an attempt to startle, emphasis was laid on the more dramatic aspects of naval life, such as keelhauling, floggings for trifling misdemeanours and the supposedly primitive messing arrangements.[70]

Another innovation was the replacement in 1998 of 'the traditional navy days' with 'a three-day Festival of the Sea'.[71]

The ability of Portsmouth to develop as a centre for heritage tourism was assisted by investment in new hotels to address the shortage of high quality accommodation which had been apparent since the 1950s. The first of these developments, in Southsea, was the opening of the Centre Hotel in 1971. This had been advertised a year in advance of its opening with the promise that all its 125 bedrooms would

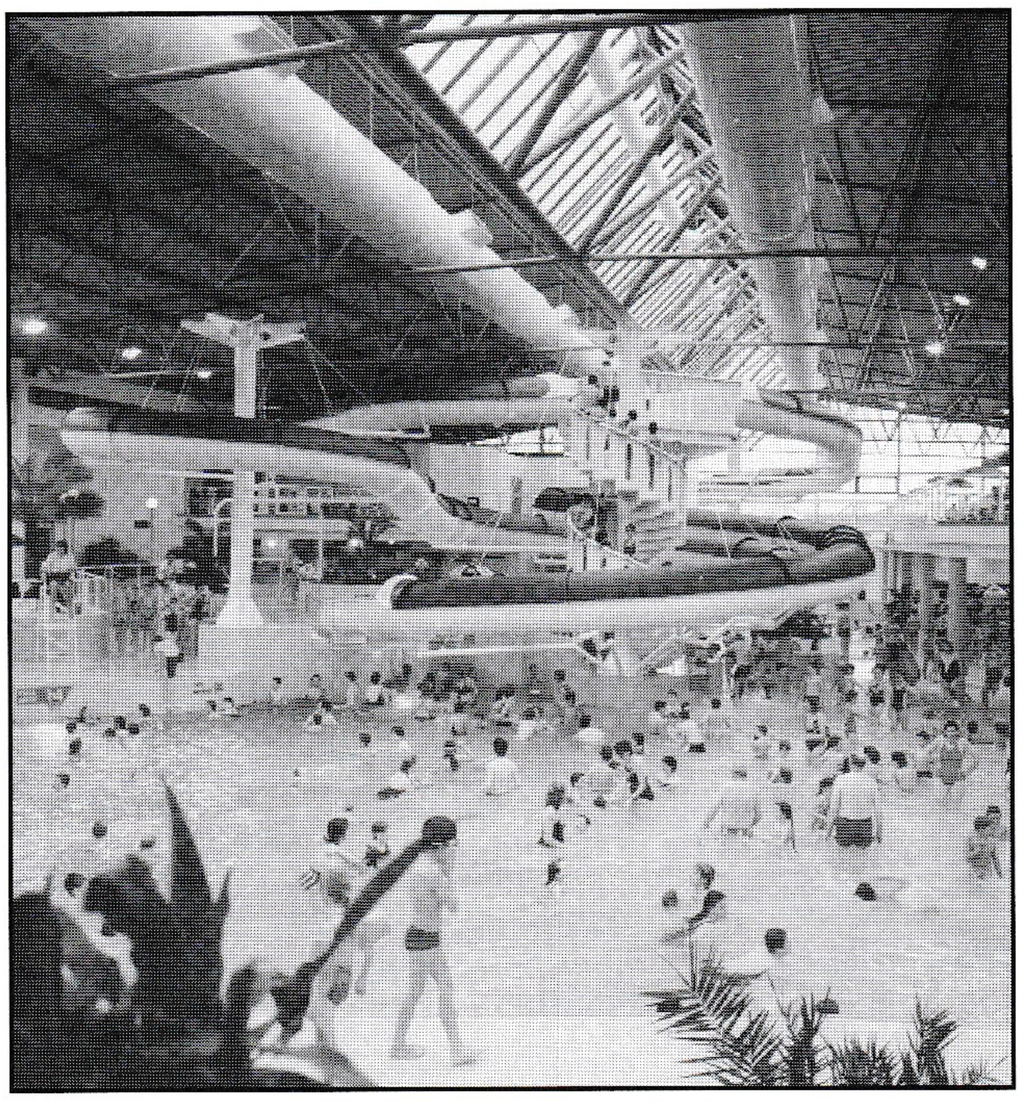
*Diana, princess of Wales, opening of the Sealife Centre, built on the site of the paddling pool, in 1986.*

have private bathrooms, the first hotel in Portsmouth to be able to make such a claim.[72] This was followed by three other new hotels - the Arcade, the Hilton National and the Holiday Inn - all located outside Southsea and all offering more than a hundred bedrooms with private facilities and a wide range of other services. Existing hotels were forced to improve their facilities to compete with these new developments. By 1990 twenty of the 23 smaller hotels in Portsmouth and Southsea, and even some of the guest houses, could offer at least some rooms with private bathrooms.

There were two significant developments in Southsea itself not foreshadowed in the *Tourism and Portsmouth* report, of which only one was wholly heritage-related. These were the establishment of the D-Day Museum, one of relatively few new museums with a purpose-built as distinct from an adapted existing building, and the Sea Life Centre, both occupying prominent positions on Clarence Esplanade between Southsea Castle and the Clarence Pier. The D-Day Museum, which provides an overview of the Normandy landings in 1944, was opened in 1984, its centre-piece being the 272 foot long Overlord Embroidery which 'illustrates the progress of the operation, in much the same way as the Bayeaux Tapestry did for the invasion of Britain by William of Normandy in 1066'.[73] The Sea Life Centre, one of a number of similar developments at various seaside locations throughout Britain, was opened in 1986. It was an illustration of how, through concentrating on the development of the Portsmouth area as a centre for tourism based on themes of maritime and military heritage, the city council was able to achieve other types of more traditional seaside development, albeit in a more contemporary guise, which had eluded it throughout the interwar and immediate post-war years when it was trying to promote Southsea as a seaside resort.

The *Tourism and Portsmouth* report did not confine its recommendations to the heritage aspects of local tourism but looked also at other ways in which the city might attract visitors. It speculated on the potential benefits of improved facilities for conferences and trade exhibitions, the staging of sporting events and the establishment of a site for a marina. The most pressing need, however, was felt to be 'the development of a multi-purpose covered complex on or near to Southsea sea front' and it was recommended that consideration be given to 'identifying sites based on the Rock Gardens Pavilion area', with the possibility of Lumps Fort as an alternative location for such a development. Clearly what the report's authors had in mind was the resurrection of the type of scheme unveiled for Lumps Fort in 1937 and never proceeded with, but updated to meet modern requirements. There was, however, some confusion about what was needed. Was it to be primarily an

*The main leisure pool and flumes in The Pyramids, 1988.*



entertainment complex such as the city council had operated on South Parade Pier until 1967 and, in a more limited manner, at the Rock Gardens Pavilion since 1975? Was it to be a centre for conferences or trade exhibitions or sports? The examples referred to were the recently completed leisure complexes at Great Yarmouth and Rhyl, the major components of which were leisure pools, and the Brighton Centre, 'nationally recognised as a major conference, exhibition, entertainment and sports promotion venue'. Attention was also drawn to the 'plans . . . emerging in Bournemouth for a massive investment to create a conference and leisure complex'.[74] Financial considerations usually meant that local authorities had to choose between competing demands. Bournemouth and Brighton opted for conference/entertainment/exhibition centres, Great Yarmouth and Rhyl for entertainment complexes with a leisure pool as the centre-piece. Torquay was unusual in being able to incorporate a leisure pool with conference/entertainment/ exhibition provision at its Riviera Centre, which was opened in 1987.

In 1982 the city council's Leisure Services Committee was recommended to investigate the provision of 'a multi-purpose covered complex', the precise components of which were still to be identified, within the Rock Gardens site, with the development being integrated into the existing gardens. The intention was that the city council should provide the land only and rely on the private sector to fund and operate the development.[75] Three years later the proposed development had been given a strong entertainment and leisure bias, and was to include a leisure pool, multi-purpose hall and small winter garden. There were to be extensive refreshment facilities including a self-contained public house. Admission to the new centre, to be called the Pyramids from the design of the roof, was to be by a single-price ticket which gave access to the whole building and all its facilities, the price to be varied according to the time of year and with a season ticket for local residents. The capital costs of the development were estimated at £9,600,000 and the development was to be a joint one between the city council and Techno Sunley Leisure, a subsidiary of Sunley Holdings. An accompanying report by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy did, however, express some concern that the financial projections by the private sector partner were over-optimistic and exposed the city council to some financial risk.[76] By early 1988 much of the development had been completed and it was partially open to the public. It was fully in use later that year. It was initially operated by Clifford Barnett Ltd, with the city council as a junior partner owning a minority of the shares. In April 1990 Clifford Barnett went into liquidation and the city council bought up the remainder of the shares, operating the Pyramids through an arms-length company. When the city council 'externalised' its Direct Services Organisation in 1995, this new body took on the contract for The Pyramids, the city council paying a management fee to the contractors.

The Pyramids gave Southsea the sort of leisure development that had been undertaken by most larger towns and most seaside resorts by the early 1990s. In 1985 Butlin's announced that they were to spend £9 million redeveloping the Minehead camp, which reopened in 1986 as Somerwest World, complete with 'an enclosed water playground called the Sunsplash Club, with three sixty-foot-high water slides, rapids and whirlpools'.[77] Leisure pools had first been developed in the 1970s, in the seaside suburbs of Tyneside, at South Shields and Whitley Bay. In many respects these were seaside resorts comparable with Southsea, though the total population of the Tyneside conurbation, at just over a million, was somewhat greater than the combined population of the Portsmouth harbour area, including Fareham, Gosport and Havant, which totalled less than half a million. The advantages of the leisure pool over the more traditional type of swimming pool were considerable:

> The leisure pool brings the outdoors indoors and often under much more comfortable conditions. The pool is irregular in shape like a lagoon - and has a high proportion of shallow water. It contains a water spout, play chute and imitation rocks which act both as a wave break and as fun objects for climbing over. But the most exciting feature is the wave machine which sends out parallel waves . . . from the deep end to the beach which shelves gently up to the feet of people in the sitting out area . . . Mums can walk toddlers in the shallow end without having to be in a swimsuit - just like paddling at the seaside. The shallows are also an excellent area to learn to swim for small children can lie on their tummies and float themselves along with the ground right beneath them.[78]

*The funfair at Clarence Pier, 1990.*

Although The Pyramids relied heavily on use by local residents of the Portsmouth conurbation for the bulk of its income, it also provided the type of facilities that tourists, especially those with children, expected to find in the main tourist centres and therefore contributed to the overall package that the city council was able to offer visitors to Portsmouth and Southsea.

Despite the major investment in both heritage developments and other attractions which the city council had decided was essential for the promotion of tourism in the Portsmouth region - and there was plenty of independent evidence to support this decision - visitors often expressed more support for the traditional aspects of seaside holidaymaking than for newer facilities. A seafront survey at Southsea in 1988 demonstrated this.[79] The number of interviewees, at 479, was fairly small and the value of the survey was somewhat reduced by the fact that it did not seek much personal information from the interviewees, such as their ages, professions or leisure interests. Those interviewed were asked to comment on the 'enjoyability' of seafront attractions and facilities The results, awarding maximum points, ten out of ten, for each attraction or facility, are summarised in Table 4.

**Table 4: Responses in awarding of maximum points to leisure facilities in Southsea, 1988**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| D-Day Museum | 74.1% | Royal Marines Museum | 54.0% |
| Bowls | 66.7% | Model Village | 50.0% |
| Rose Gardens | 64.8% | South Parade Pier | 48.2% |
| Rock Gardens | 64.3% | Fun Acres (fairground) | 37.8% |
| Cumberland House Museum | 60.0% | Pyramids | 34.0% |
| Canoe Lake | 59.9% | Sea Life Centre | 27.2% |
| Pitch 'n' Putt | 58.8% | Tennis | 23.8% |
| Skate Park | 58.5% | Southsea Castle | 15.7% |
| Miniature Golf | 54.4% | | |

The low top ratings for tennis and Southsea Castle disguised the fact that they, respectively, scored 72.4% and 75.8% if enjoyment ratings of eight or more out of ten were included. The low rating for The Pyramids reflected the fact that it was then only partially open. Some investments, such as the D-Day Museum, had proved more successful as visitor attractions than others, such as the Sea Life Centre, which was considered poor value for money, the other factor apart from enjoyability which interviewees were asked to assess. The high ratings for the city council's gardens, for bowls and the Canoe Lake, showed that some of the older initiatives of the traditional seaside resort were still popular with many visitors. The conversion of the bandstand into a skate park had, however, proved moderately popular.

In fact it was estimated that the investments made by the city council and others had generally paid off. By 1989 Portsmouth and Southsea were attracting 'over three million visitors' who, between them, 'spent £123 million on local goods and services. With the indirect and induced effects of this demand taken into account the total value of tourism to the city is estimated to be between £270 and £290 million'. The tourism industry in the city supported 7,900 jobs of which 5,000 were 'in direct tourist services and the remainder in local support industries'. It was estimated that 'the real value of tourist spending . . . has increased by 20% over the two years' between 1987 and 1989.[80] The city had been extremely successful in attracting day visitors, who accounted for 76.1% of the total number of visitors. Of those visitors who stayed at least one night in the city, 29.7% were on business, 32.6% were on a family holiday in serviced accommodation, and 24.9% were visiting friends or relations. There were still relatively few visitors (4.9%) from overseas or staying in non-serviced accommodation.[81] However, in terms of spend per head, it was overseas visitors who made by far the largest contribution to the local economy; their average daily spend was £58.14, compared with £40.34 for domestic holidaymakers in serviced accommodation, £39.05 for visitors on business, an average of £24.77 for those in self-catering accommodation or visiting friends and relations, and £14.59 for day visitors. Overseas visitors spent the most on accommodation, on food and drink and, especially, on shopping, where their average daily spend of £17.80 was more than double that of any other category of visitor. However, the report's authors concluded 'that the two most important groups of spenders are day trippers and domestic holiday visitors who between them account for over 50% of all direct tourist expenditure in the city'. There was a veiled warning to the city council that too much investment in leisure and entertainment facilities might not be a wise one, since visitors to the city were only spending 18.8% of their outgoings on leisure and entertainment, compared with 24.4% on food and drink, 23.9% on accommodation and 21.2% on shopping.[82] Significant improvements to the city's catering and shopping facilities took place from 1998 following the sale of the former Gunwharf ordnance depot for commercial redevelopment.

## Conclusion

It is perhaps ironic that, with the opening of The Pyramids and the Sea Life Centre, Portsmouth and Southsea should eventually have established the sort of indoor attractions typical of the up-to-date seaside resort, almost twenty years after the city council had effectively decided that it was no longer interested in marketing Portsmouth and Southsea primarily as a seaside resort. From the 1920s to the 1960s the city council had debated how Southsea could be maintained as a seaside resort in the face both of competition from other British seaside resorts and of changes in the patterns of popular holiday-making. It had, however, failed to do much more than debate the issues. Its acquisition of Southsea Common in 1922 had only resulted in the construction of the formal gardens which, though very attractive, were in essence no different from similar gardens provided in other fashionable south coast resorts such as Bournemouth, Eastbourne and Torquay. The acquisition of Lumps Fort in 1932 resulted in the production of ambitious plans for major development, but it was a development which, apart from the rose gardens and the model village, never got beyond the drawing board. Even in the 1960s, the major attractions of Southsea were those that dated back, at least in their origins, to the nineteenth century: Clarence and South Parade Piers and Canoe Lake. There was little in the way of indoor entertainment and a shortage of high quality accommodation compared with other seaside resorts.

In the longer term, however, the failure of the city council, or the private sector, to invest in Southsea did mean that the resort faced fewer problems in the 1950s and 1960s when the market for holidays at British seaside resorts began to contract. It had fewer potentially redundant buildings on its hands and fewer reductions to make in the provision of facilities that were no longer profitable. The seaside resort of Margate had to make painful decisions in the 1950s about the future of the Westbrook Pavilion, to rationalise its catering department, abandon tea dances, reduce the number of deck-chair attendants, increase chalet rents, cease to employ a children's entertainer and exercise much greater financial control over council-sponsored shows at the Winter Gardens; all these economies were expected to reduce expenditure, borne by the ratepayers to fund a declining number of visitors, by nearly £20,000 in a full year. Similar economies had to be made at other Kent resorts such as Folkestone and Ramsgate, and all these resorts tried, much less successfully than Southsea, to promote themselves as centres from which to visit the historic towns and villages of the neighbouring countryside.[83]

In terms of resort publicity there was before 1970 a clear tension between those who wanted to maintain Southsea as a select seaside resort and those who wanted to make it more popular. Attempts at popular publicity, as seen in the cases of the 1934 'Exit Mrs Grundy' and 1958 'Bikini Girl' placards, proved to be controversial and were not sustained. The general run of resort publicity, as seen in the guidebooks, was low-key, old-fashioned and poorly produced. It was probably as well that it was, since the lack of investment in resort accommodation, attractions and facilities would have meant that additional visitors attracted by more aggressive publicity would have been dissatisfied and unwilling to return. The success of seaside resorts always depended on a high rate of return visitors satisfied with what the resort had to offer.

The decision to market Portsmouth and Southsea as a base for heritage tourism after 1970 did not result solely from the failure of the city council to maintain Southsea as a major seaside resort. The council had decided, for other reasons, to put more emphasis on the history of Portsmouth and to develop its museum service. It had, therefore, some existing resources that it could use to underpin its new strategy and to develop it further. As far as public perceptions were concerned there was not a great gulf between Portsmouth as an industrial and commercial centre, and Portsmouth as a city that catered for heritage tourism, in the way that there always had been between Portsmouth as a dockyard city and Southsea as a seaside resort, with both being part of the same conurbation. Heritage tourism also meant that accommodation and attractions did not have to be concentrated in Southsea but could be spread about the whole conurbation. Nevertheless Portsmouth attractions are still concentrated in two areas: the historic dockyard and Southsea. Southsea has developed both heritage attractions, in Southsea Castle and the D-Day Museum, and new seaside ones, in The Pyramids and the Sea Life Centre. The decision to develop a heritage-orientated tourism strategy for Portsmouth and Southsea has, far from providing the final nail in its coffin as a seaside resort, given the seaside elements of the city a new lease of life. In that sense Southsea may in the future find it easier to attract visitors than those seaside resorts which, though they may still have more to offer than Southsea in terms of seaside attractions, have not been able to develop an equivalent range of non-seaside attractions and thus broaden their tourism base. Nor has the promotion of Portsmouth and Southsea stopped with just the attractions of the city and the immediate area around Portsmouth harbour. The Defence of the Realm marketing initiative has endeavoured to promote the Portsmouth area as a base to visit a wide range of attractions, not all military, in Hampshire, Dorset, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight.[84] It is too early to judge the long-term success of this new strategy but the short-term is certainly encouraging.

**NOTES**

Guides and reports relating to the city can be found in the City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth.

[1] J. K. Walton, *The English Seaside Resort: A Social History 1750-1914*, Leicester 1983, p. 65.

[2] See R. C. Riley, *The Growth of Southsea as a Naval Satellite and Victorian Resort*, Portsmouth Paper no. 16, Portsmouth 1972, esp. pp. 12-24.

[3] On Eastbourne, developed as a seaside town by the Dukes of Devonshire from 1849, see D. Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967*, Leicester 1980, pp. 239-388; on Bournemouth and Southport see the essays by J. Liddle and R. Roberts in *Patricians, Power and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*, ed. D. Cannadine, Leicester 1982, pp. 133-218.

[4] Figures from Walton, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 65-6. Riley, *op. cit.*, p. 12, gives a slightly higher population figure (49,631) for Southsea in 1911.

[5] 11 and 12 George V, ch. 27.

[6] J. A. R. Pimlott, *The Englishman's Holiday*, London 1947, pp. 243-5.

[7] S. E. Peacock, *Borough Government in Portsmouth 1835-1974*, Portsmouth Paper no. 23, Portsmouth 1975, pp. 12-13, 17.

[8] *Southsea and Portsmouth Official Guide*, Portsmouth 1907, p. 9.

[9] Copy of 1931-2 guidebook and accompanying photographic stills held in archives and local history section of Ramsgate Library.

[10] *Southsea and Portsmouth Official Guide*, Portsmouth 1933, p. 15.

[11] *City of Portsmouth: Records of the Corporation 1928-30*, ed. W. G. Gates, Portsmouth 1931, pp. 15-17. This modest expenditure in Southsea needs to be set against much higher expenditure in some other resorts, of which perhaps the highest was the nearly three million pounds spent by Blackpool on promenades, gardens and swimming pools; Hastings spent £380,000 on a new pavilion, baths and promenade, Hove £175,000 on a leisure complex and Worthing £80,000 on its pier and pavilions; see J. Walvin, *Beside the Seaside*, London 1978, p. 117; Pimlott, *op.cit.*, pp. 243-5; and A. Hern, *The Seaside Holiday*, London 1967, p. 170.

[12] *City of Portsmouth: Records of the Corporation 1931-5*, ed. W. G. Gates, Portsmouth 1936, pp. 150-1.

[13] Letter in *Portsmouth Evening News*, 12 April 1958.

[14] *Records of the Corporation 1931-5*, pp. 82-3, 199-200.

[15] *City of Portsmouth: Records of the Corporation 1936-45*, ed. V. Blanchard, Portsmouth n.d., p. 36. City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, 1469A/1/1 Original plan of proposal.

[16] F. Stafford and W. N. Yates, *Kentish Sources IX: The Later Kentish Seaside*, Maidstone 1985, pp. 116-17, 181.

[17] *Records of the Corporation 1931-5*, p. 199.

[18] *Records of the Corporation 1936-45*, pp. 97, 137.

[19] For the background to this see H. Cunningham, 'Culture and Leisure', *Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950: Volume 2 People and Their Environment*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson, Cambridge 1990, pp. 279-89.

[20] For the national background and overall response of British seaside resorts see J. K. Walton, *The British Seaside: Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, Manchester 2000, pp. 63-70, 112-19, 158-66.

[21] *Southsea for Happy Holidays*, Portsmouth 1949, p. 3. In fact, this photo was of a starlet taken in Brighton! City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, 101A.

[22] Pictures of the council-owned South Parade Pier were frequently used on the front covers of holiday guides; pictures of the privately-owned Clarence Pier were always relegated to the inside pages.

[23] W. N. Yates, 'Selling the Seaside', *History Today*, xxviii (August 1988), pp. 24-5.

[24] City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, 101A/8/7.

[25] The experiences of Ted Rogers as a Butlin's Redcoat at the Ocean Hotel, Brighton, in 1959 are recounted in S. Reed and B. Haynes, *Hello Campers*, London 1986, pp. 161-2. Butlin purchased three of the largest hotels in Margate in the 1950s, see Stafford and Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

[26] See relevant distribution maps in C. Ward and D. Hardy, *Goodnight Campers: the History of the British Holiday Camp*, London 1986, pp. 119, 151.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 125-8.

[28] *Southsea Official Guide*, Portsmouth 1948, p. 39.

[29] See Walton, *English Seaside Resort*, pp. 82-93.

[30] Stafford and Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

[31] Figures in Tables 2 and 3 are based on the information in the following holiday guides: *Southsea and the City of Portsmouth: Accommodation and General Information*, Portsmouth 1946, pp. 28-46; *Southsea Official Guide*, Portsmouth 1948, pp. 13-23, 41-6, 49-56; *Portsmouth and Southsea for Happy Holidays*, Portsmouth 1950, pp. 43-80; *Portsmouth and Southsea Guide*, Portsmouth 1960, pp. 50-97; *Portsmouth and Southsea Guide*, Portsmouth 1970, pp. 54-119; *Portsmouth and Southsea Guide*, Portsmouth 1980, pp. 50-92; *Portsmouth and Southsea Guide*, Portsmouth 1990, pp. 37-71.

[32] *Portsmouth and Southsea Guide*, Portsmouth 1960, p. 97.

[33] *Southsea Official Guide*, Portsmouth 1948, p. 13.

[34] Stafford and Yates, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

[35] The relevant newscuttings will be found in two scrapbooks in the City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, 101A/6/2 and 101A/6/5.

[36] *Glasgow Daily Record*, 9 April 1958.

[37] *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1958.

[38] *Portsmouth Evening News*, 3 April 1958.

[39] *Ibid.*, 7 April 1958.

[40] *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 3 April 1958.

[41] *Daily Mail*, 10 April 1958.

[42] *Portsmouth Evening News*, 12 April 1958.

[43] *Star,* 22 April 1958.

[44] *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24 May 1958.

[45] *Ibid.*, 27 June 1958.

[46] *Ibid.*, 30 June 1958; *Daily Sketch*, 30 June 1958; *Hampshire Telegraph and Post*, 4 July 1958; *Everybody's*, 19 July 1958.

[47] *Sunday Pictorial*, 6 July 1958.

[48] *Welcome to Sunny Southsea*, Portsmouth 1971; c.f. the Ramsgate references in note 9.

[49] *Tourism and Portsmouth*, Portsmouth 1982, pp. 51-2; J. Webb, S. Quail, P. Haskell and R. Riley, *The Spirit of Portsmouth: A History*, Chichester 1989, pp. 166-7.

[50] *City of Portsmouth: Records of the Corporation* 1956-65, ed. V. Blanchard, Portsmouth 1972, pp. 94-5.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

[52] G. D. M. Black, *Britons on Holiday*, London 1963, p. 16.

[53] *Tourism and Portsmouth*, pp. 15-16.

[54] N. Pevsner and D. Lloyd, *Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, Harmondsworth 1967, p. 409. There is a description of these buildings, and of other defensive works and naval and military buildings, on pp. 409-31. See also J. Coad, *Historic Architecture of HM Naval Base Portsmouth, 1700-1850*, Portsmouth 1981, reprinted from the February 1981 issue of *The Mariner's Mirror*.

[55] *Royal Marines Museum*, Portsmouth n.d.; typescript report and mission statement 1974; museum appeal leaflet 1974; *The Globe and Laurel*, January/February 1987, p. 40 and January/February 1998, p. 30, outlining developments since 1980. I am grateful to the museum curator, Stephen Brooks, for supplying me with copies of this useful material.

[56] City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, CCM 15/40, *Report on the Development of Portsmouth and Southsea as a Holiday Resort and Centre of Recreation*, p. 9.

[57] *Tourism and Portsmouth*, p. 27.

[58] *Portsmouth: the Flagship of Maritime England*, Portsmouth 1982, p. 9.

[59] *Tourism and Portsmouth*, p. 1.

[60] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-100.

[61] Earlier figure for Southsea Castle from *Portsmouth 1975-1979: A History Based on the Records of the Council*, ed. R. C. Riley, Portsmouth 1993, p. 19.

[62] *Tourism and Portsmouth*, p. 94; for other developments in Kent at this time see W. N. Yates, 'Museums in Kent: An Historical and Contemporary Survey', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, cxi (1993), pp. 201-10.

[63] *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, pp. 31016, 31019; *Annual Register 1981*, London 1982, pp. 176-7; for the heritage

developments at Chatham dockyard see *Kent in the Twentieth Century*, ed. W. N. Yates, Woodbridge 2001, pp. 346, 354.

[64] *Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust: Ten Year Review*, Portsmouth 1996, p. 1; *Naval Review*, lxxiv (no. 1, January 1986), pp. 42-3; City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, 5011A Interview with Peter Goodship, chief executive of the property trust, 24 October 2001; see also *Portsmouth Historic Naval Base and Ships: Development Study*, Beaulieu 1983.

[65] J. Brown, *The Preservation of HMS Victory: a Report to the Ministry of Defence*, Leigh 1987, p. 16.

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5; *The Globe and the Laurel*, March/April 1988, p. 102; see also *The Portsmouth Naval Heritage Project: Interpretation Policy and Plan*, Portsmouth 1986.

[67] *A Proposal for the Portsmouth Historic Naval Dockyard*, Sealink British Ferries, 14 June 1988; *Naval Review*, July 1991, pp. 221-4, and October 1993, pp. 411-17.

[68] City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, 5011A Interview with Peter Goodship, 24 October 2001 and private communication of 4 February 2002.

[69] R. Riley, 'A Model-Based Approach to Unravelling Naval and Defence Heritage: Supply- and Demand-Side Issues in Portsmouth's Coastal Zone', *Ocean and Coastal Management*, xlii (1999), pp. 891-908. The issue here is the old debate about the ethics of conserving what may be there or restoring it to what may be only a hypothetical past condition. HMS *Victory* has to have wooden replica cannon rather than real iron ones to avoid unnecessary strain on her decks, for example, but how far does this detract from her 'authenticity'? What compromises are acceptable between conserving the dockyard heritage area as it was and its restoration and the provision of facilities that will attract paying visitors?

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 900. The first permanent, professional curator for *Victory*, Peter Goodwin, was appointed in 1991.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 902.

[72] *Portsmouth and Southsea Guide*, Portsmouth 1970, p. 54.

[73] K. Hudson and A. Nicholls, *Cambridge Guide to the Museums of Britain and Ireland*, Cambridge 1987, p. 349. The guide lists a total of eleven museums for Portsmouth and Southsea.

[74] *Tourism and Portsmouth*, p. 91. For the developments at Rhyl see Walton, *British Seaside*, pp. 116-17.

[75] City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, Draft Report of Chief Executive on Rock Gardens Pavilion Site, 1982.

[76] City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, Rock Gardens Pavilion Redevelopment: Stage 3 Feasibility Study, March 1985.

[77] Reed and Haynes, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-4.

[78] *South Tyneside Holiday Guide*, South Shields 1978, p. 30c.

[79] City Museum & Records Office, Portsmouth, Southsea Seafront Survey, 1988.

[80] S. Brettell and J. Grainger, *An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Tourism Demand on the Portsmouth City Economy*, Portsmouth 1990, p. 1.

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 2 (table 1).

[82] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

[83] Stafford and Yates, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-6, 133-4.

[84] *The Defence of the Realm: the Military Heritage of Southern England*, Shepperton 1992.

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Dr Nigel Yates was Portsmouth City Records Officer from 1975 until 1980 when he became County Archivist of Kent and, in 1990, Head of Heritage Services for Kent County Council. He retired in 1994 to concentrate on academic research and was appointed to a Senior Research Fellowship at the University of Wales, Lampeter in 2000. In addition to his substantial publications on religious history, he was the co-author of *The Later Kentish Seaside 1840-1974* (1985), has published 'Selling the Seaside', a study of British seaside resort promotion, in *History Today* (1988) and has contributed the chapter on 'Culture and Leisure' to *Kent in the Twentieth Century* (2001), of which he was also the editor. He is currently planning to undertake a comprehensive study of Welsh seaside resorts.

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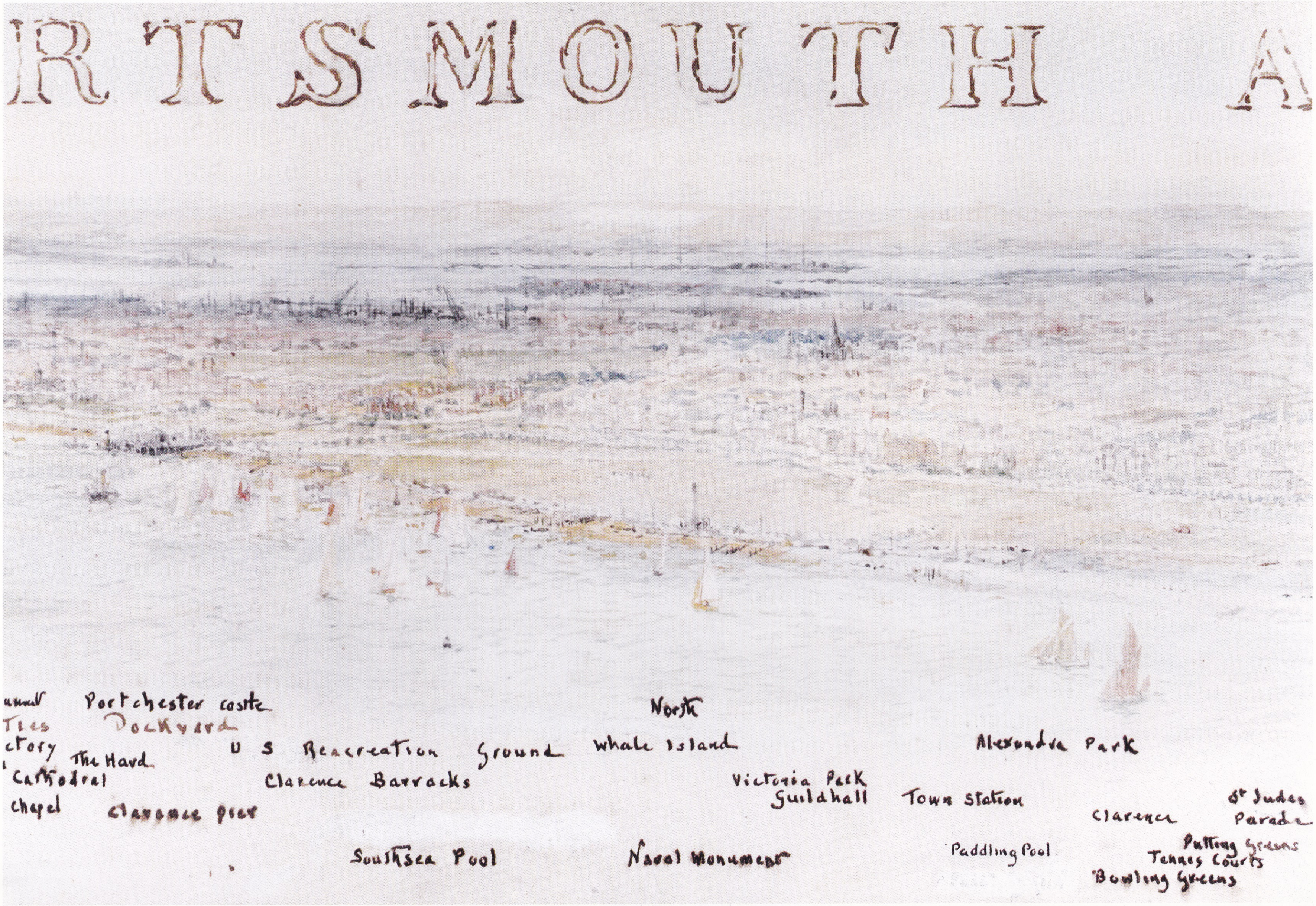


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